

# Rolling Stone

Issue 1101  
April 1, 2010  
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Bands  
of 2010**

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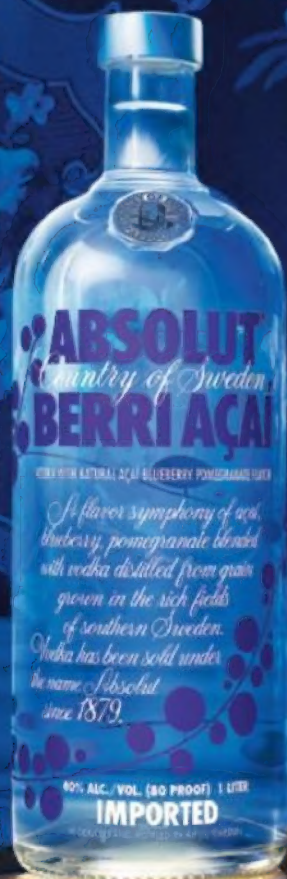
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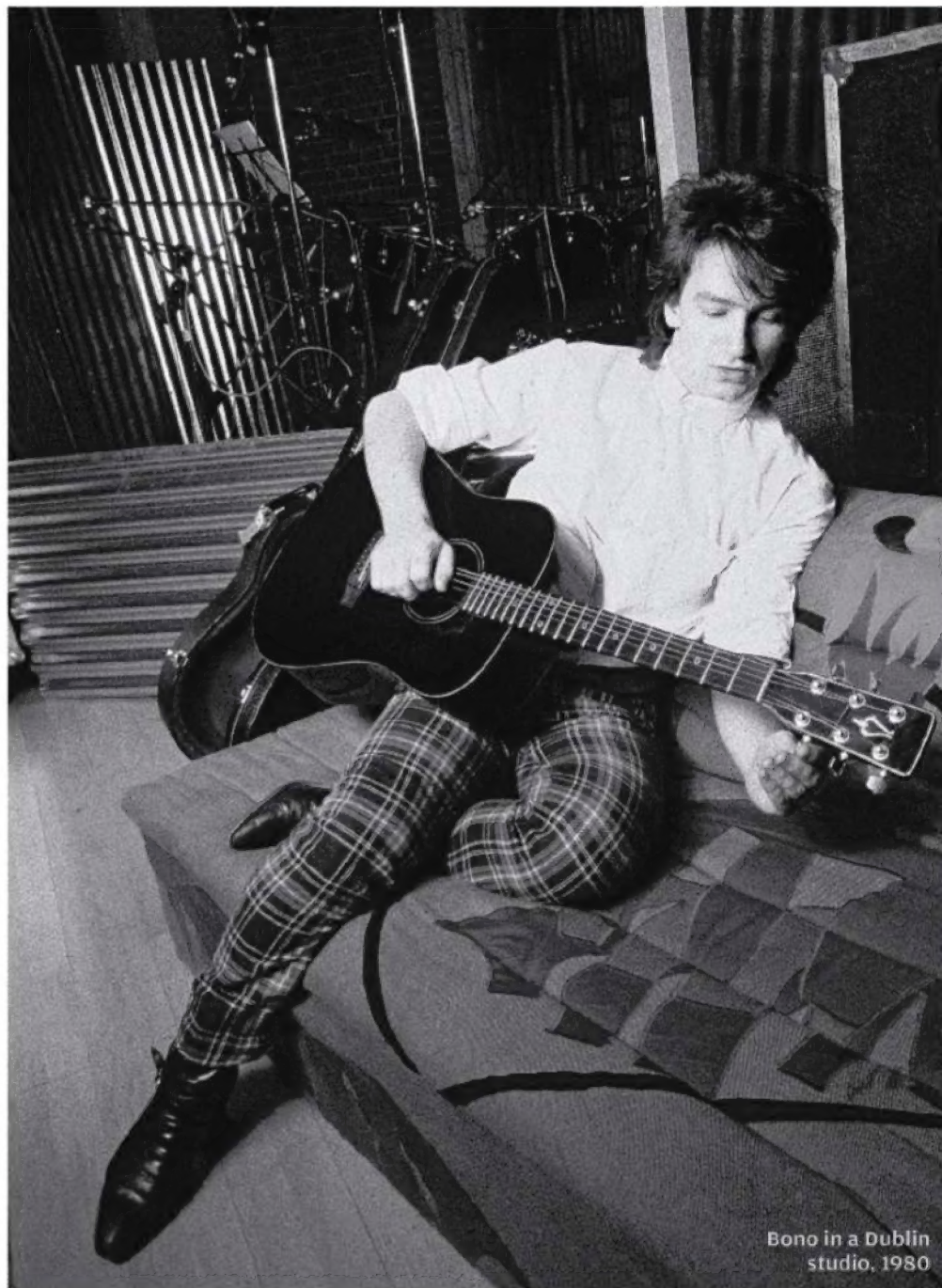
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# RS1101

"All the News That Fits"



Bono in a Dublin studio, 1980

## U2: Stories From 'Boy'

In 1978, Colm Henry, a photographer for Dublin's *Hot Press* magazine, saw a new band called U2 at a tiny club named the Baggot Inn. "They were terrible," he says, "but they had a magnetic energy that made you look at them." Henry would shoot them for the next 20 years; the photo above was taken during the sessions for 1980's *Boy*. Remarkably, "Bono was very self-conscious back then," says Henry. "He's holding the guitar so he doesn't have to look into the camera." Henry's photo exhibit *U2: The Early Years* is on display in London through June.

### COVER STORY

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Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning deliver raunchy blasts of Seventies-jailbait rock history in biopic.

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### On the Cover

Jimi Hendrix performing in Berlin, September 4th, 1970.

**Photograph by Plitz/Good Times/Cache Agency**

## NOW ON ROLLINGSTONE.COM



### Best New Bands at SXSW

ROLLING STONE favorites Free Energy (above) and Titus Andronicus play our first-ever showcase at the South by Southwest music conference in Austin. See photos and video at [rollingstone.com/issue1101](http://rollingstone.com/issue1101)

### Graham Nash: Live at RS

Fresh off the Hollies' Rock Hall induction, Nash hits our studio for an acoustic set.



### VIDEO INTERVIEW

### Meet the Runaways

Kristen Stewart, Dakota Fanning and the original all-girl Runaways on their badass tale. *Plus:* Win a Gibson guitar signed by Joan Jett.\*

## RANDOM VOTES

Which big spring album are you most excited about?

38%

Tom Petty



36%

MGMT



Vote now at [rollingstone.com](http://rollingstone.com): Nineties rockers Courtney Love and Billy Corgan are back with their best songs in a decade. Which one do you like better?

\*The Runaways Gibson Guitar sweepstakes is open to residents of the 50 United States and Washington, D.C., who are 18 years of age or older as of March 15th, 2010. To enter, log on to [rollingstone.com/therunawayssweepstakes](http://rollingstone.com/therunawayssweepstakes) and follow the entering directions provided therein. No purchase necessary. Void where prohibited. Sweepstakes begins at 9 a.m. EST on March 18th, 2010, and ends at 11:59 p.m. EST on April 2nd, 2010. Number of winners: three. Certain restrictions may apply. Complete Official Rules are available at [rollingstone.com/therunawayssweepstakes](http://rollingstone.com/therunawayssweepstakes)

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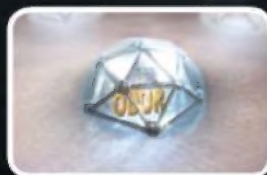


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# Behind the Scenes



Binelli with Swami at the Emerald Cup

## The Swami of Pot

**W**HEN CONTRIBUTING EDITOR Mark Binelli started reporting this issue's feature on marijuana, he didn't know much about pot. "I'm not a big smoker," he says. "I like *Pineapple Express*, but I never liked jam bands or cared about NORML. I found the stoner culture on the whole kind of uninteresting." Then he spent a week in Northern California's Emerald Triangle – the epicenter of America's pot industry – and discovered a "crazily obsessive subculture, with different levels of criminality." One of the more memorable characters he encountered was Swami, a marijuana guru who served as a judge for this year's Emerald Cup, the Academy Awards of the weed industry. "Swami sensed that I was a little green, and true to his name, he wanted to enlighten me," Binelli says. "He takes a meditative approach to getting really baked."

Under Swami's tutelage, Binelli sampled the competition's winning strains. He also took part in every facet of the Emerald Triangle's booming industry, from trimming thousands of dollars worth of plants to witnessing the clandestine distribution of high-grade weed. He even came across little old ladies involved in the pot trade. "It surprised me that the industry there is such its own world," he says. "Everyone is involved, from top to bottom."

While this new "green revolution" was born in California, other places Binelli visited also have burgeoning pot economies – including his native Detroit. Binelli, who is working on a book about his hometown's struggles, is intrigued by the idea that buds can replace Buicks. "But the mayor's office," he says, "isn't exactly jumping on the idea of Detroit becoming the Amsterdam of the Midwest."

—WILL DANA, *Managing Editor*

## Hendrix Through the Years

**J**IMI HENDRIX DIED only three years after we published the first issue of *ROLLING STONE*, but we've been celebrating his trailblazing career ever since. "Jimi Hendrix is dead at age 24," *RS* reported on page one of his September 1970 obituary, getting his age wrong by three years. "Police say it was a drug overdose." Since then, Hendrix has appeared on the cover four more times. In 1987, for our tribute to the greatest live performances, we fea-



tured him lighting his guitar on fire at the end of his historic Monterey Pop set – a moment that David Fricke described as "the ultimate rock & roll spectacle, a brilliant grandstand by the consummate psychedelic showman." And in 2003, we placed Hendrix at the top of our list of the 100 greatest rock & roll guitarists of all time. "With Jimi, I didn't have any envy," Pete Townshend confessed in that issue. "I never had any sense that I could ever come close."

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# THE FIRST GUMMIBWICH



# Correspondence

## { Love Letters & Advice }



### Guitar Heroes

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING cover story on Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck ["The Long and Winding Road," RS 1099]. For the first time ever, we get to see two of the best guitarists on the planet in the same room reflecting on music, life and friendship. These two have been part of one of the best, yet most bittersweet, musical relationships in history.

*Dan Grimm, Phoenix*

THANKS TO DAVID FRICKE for his interviews with these guitar giants. It is very rare to get the chance to see inside the world of these men.

*Ian McMichael, Butler, PA*

BRILLIANT COVER AND interviews with Beck and Clapton. What 65-year-old musicians will be this interesting and still very relevant to

the music world 40 years from now? We should enjoy these rock pioneers while we can.

*Doug Beck, Smithfield, RI*

SOMEBODY TELL JEFF BECK that some of us have *always* known who he is.

*Maria Jett, Tulsa, OK*

HEARING THE OLD MASTERS talk was priceless. They'll be remembered as two of the most innovative musicians of the 20th century.

*Dale Posey, Boca Raton, FL*

### Bailout Scam

MATT TAIBBI OUTDOES himself with his incredible insights on this new breed of racketeers in "Wall Street's Bailout Hustle" [RS 1099]. I've learned more from his articles on these hustlers than I learned in four years getting an MBA. Thirty years from now, when they talk about organized-crime families, instead of the Gambinos and the Luccheses they'll talk about Goldman Sachs and Citigroup.

*Stuart Neft, Pittsburgh*

ON TOP OF BEING A GOOD read, Taibbi's incendiary financial-sector articles never fail to elicit the desired frustrated and appalled response. However, I'm always left with the same dilemma: Sure, I'm pissed off, but what can I do? The stories of Wall Street's

corrupt dealings and our government's dubious regulations hurt, but the resulting feeling of helplessness to do anything about it is the real killer.

*Adam Haydt, via the Internet*

YOU SHOULD SEND A COPY of Taibbi's latest article to each member of Congress – maybe it would help them understand what's really going down on Wall Street.

*Lois Vuono, Madison, NJ*

I DON'T KNOW WHY TAIBBI hasn't won a Pulitzer yet for his reporting on the Great Amer-

**"You should send a copy of Taibbi's article to each member of Congress to help them understand Wall Street."**

ican Treasury Robbery. He is the Woodward-Bernstein of his generation.

*Tony Healy, Chicago*

YOUR ARTICLE ON THE BAILOUT was one of the best explanations I have seen. It ought to be required reading.

*Bernard Kingsley*

*Finance Professor, Becker College  
Worcester, MA*

### Urban Cowboy

THANK YOU FOR RECOGNIZING a true underrated talent, Ryan Bingham [Close-Up, RS

1099]. His voice is unique, kind of like a country Tom Waits. He deserved to win the Academy Award.

*Joshua Burch, Rock Hill, SC*

RYAN BINGHAM HAS BEEN the best-kept secret in music for a few years now. Those of us who have experienced his genius and bought his records have wished that he would receive some recognition. Now that it's happening, I'm scared we'll have to share him with the masses. At least we know he earned it.

*Christopher O'Dell  
Sweet Springs, MO*

### High on 'Lost'

THANK YOU, ROB SHEFFIELD, for moving away from guilty pleasures and finally giving ink to what's been the best drama on TV for the past few years ["The 'Lost' Generation,"

RS 1099]. Sheffield's best point is that *Lost* has the rarest dramatic element: a soul.

*Ken Devine, New York*

TO PORTRAY "LOST" AS JUST for stoners is a disservice to the show and an insult to its fans. It's an intelligent hour of TV enjoyed by smart people who can't stomach the garbage pumped out by the networks. Not to say that *Jersey Shore* wasn't awesome or that *Lost* isn't amazing when you're high.

*Kenny Kohle, Bensalem, PA*

SHEFFIELD'S DESCRIPTION of Josh Holloway "wailing like a disgruntled Molly Hatchet roadie" is one of the funniest things written in RS in quite some time.

*Aaron Holbrook, via the Internet*

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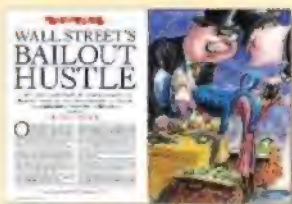
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### What They're Saying

The buzz about "Wall Street's Bailout Hustle" [RS 1099]

MATT TAIBBI'S LATEST TAKE-down of the financial industry and Goldman Sachs set off a wave of commentary across the media landscape. At *Salon*, Andrew Leonard wrote, "If you like your financial analysis written as if during the middle of a bar fight, then Taibbi is for you." *The Wall Street Journal* tried to dismiss the article with a simple "nothing really new



here." But the most interesting response came from Goldman itself. In its latest SEC filing, the company included a warning to shareholders that "adverse press coverage" could trigger a government investigation, have a "negative impact on our reputation" and "adversely affect our businesses." Here's hoping that federal regulators are reading the fine print.

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A full-page photograph of Demi Lovato performing on stage. She is wearing a black leather jacket over a teal top and black pants, with her arms raised in a 'V' sign. She is surrounded by a crowd of fans, some of whom are reaching out towards her. The scene is lit with bright stage lights, creating a high-energy atmosphere.

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## MUSE TAKE AMERICA

British trio invade New York with over-the-top laser-filled spectacle. **Page 24**

## BEST NEW BANDS

Reggae rock, power pop and stoner rap: Seven acts to watch in 2010. **Page 30**

## Q&A: IGGY POP

On getting into the Hall of Fame, and Leonard Cohen's dirty mind. **Page 39**

# Rock & Roll

### SHE'S BACK

Love in London in February, a month before scoring her first hit since the Nineties.



## Let Love Rule: Hole's Chaotic Comeback

New tune "Skinny Little Bitch" is a hit, but Courtney's troubles continue  
By Brian Hiatt

**W**ITH HOLE'S SNARLING NEW SINGLE, "Skinny Little Bitch," Courtney Love has scored her first hit since the Nineties – and found hope that she can still reclaim control of her life. "I feel like I dodged a fucking bullet," says Love, who has in recent years endured rehab, a split with her daughter and financial woes. "And I'm really grateful."

"Skinny Little Bitch," written by Love and 23-year-old Hole guitarist Micko Larkin, made the playlists of more than 50 radio stations in early March, making it the most-added modern-rock radio track for the week of its debut. But even as Love prepares for the April 27th release of *Nobody's Daughter* – which follows her 2004 solo flop, *America's Sweetheart* (which she now refers to as "*le disastre*") – her troubles aren't necessarily over.

She's selected an anthemic song called "Samantha" as the album's [Cont. on 16]

## Scalpers Busted for \$20 Million Scam

High-tech crew faces jail for using software to get the best seats

By Steve Knopper

**F**OR MORE THAN SIX years, four men who ran California-based Wiseguy Tickets allegedly used computer programs to overcome Ticketmaster security, sweep up thousands of the best seats to the hot-

### CONCERT BIZ

test concerts – and profit a remarkable \$20 million. But now the Wiseguys are busted: Calling their business practices a "conspiracy" involving the use of hundreds of credit-card numbers that allowed them to vary their purchasing addresses, a U.S. attorney in New Jersey filed a 43-count indictment on February 23rd that could land the crew in jail for as long as 20 years each.

The Wiseguys indictment brings to light something artists, promoters and Ticketmaster executives have been complaining about for years: hackers gobbling up tickets in bulk, preventing fans from getting the best seats and fueling the multibillion-dollar resale industry. The concert biz has responded [Cont. on 18]

# Joan Jett's Wild Life Hits the Screen

On the *Runaways* biopic and being played by Kristen Stewart

By Melissa Maerz

**T**HE STORY OF THE RUN-aways, five messed-up teenagers who became the toughest all-girl band in rock & roll, debuts this month in *The Runaways*, directed by Floria Sigismondi. Dakota Fanning stars as blond bombshell Cherie Currie, and Kristen Stewart plays the band's

## CHECKING IN

guitarist, Joan Jett, who also served as a producer and adviser to Stewart. It worked: "It was surreal," says Jett. "She nailed my moves. She really embodied them." We spoke with Jett about watching her own life play out onscreen.

*In the movie, your guitar teacher tells you that girls shouldn't play rock & roll. Did that really happen?*

When I was 11 or 12, I was listening to "Bang a Gong" and "All Right Now" on the radio. I really wanted to make those



**BORN TO BE BAD** Jett and Stewart on the set of *The Runaways*, which is based on frontwoman Cherie Currie's 1989 memoir

sounds. At my first lesson, he took out the sheet music for "On Top of Old Smokey." So I left. And I taught myself to play.

*Kristen Stewart says you taught her to put sexuality into her guitar playing.*

Well, the guitar sits right on your pubic bone, and when you hit a chord, it just vibrates right through your body. It's a powerful feeling. So when Kristen would play, I'd say, "Pussy to the wood! Fuck the guitar!"

*Do you think she played you well?*

Yeah. I asked the studio to send me a mix of her singing "I Love Playing With Fire," but when I listened, I could only hear my own voice. I was like, "You sent me the wrong one. I want to hear Kristen." They were like, "That is Kristen." It was perfect – no Auto-Tune.

*There's a scene in the movie where you and Runaways singer Cherie Currie hook up. Did you see that moment as a romantic thing?*

I don't see it as romantic at all. Teenage girls just bond – you see them hugging and holding hands all the time. But experimentation with sex and drugs was part of the appeal of the Seventies to me. You could try new things – but not be judged for it.

*What do you say to people who think there are no women in rock anymore?*

I can tell you for sure: They're out there. When we did Warped Tour, there were girl bands in every city. And if the Runaways did anything to inspire them to pick up an instrument, I've done my job.

## HOLE

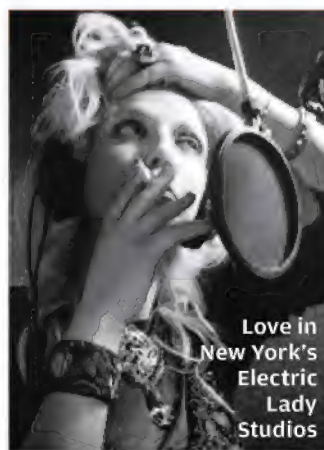
[Cont. from 15] second single, but after a falling-out with one of the song's co-writers, Billy Corgan, she's worried that she might not be able to release the song at all. Corgan told ROLLING STONE in February that he had severed ties with Love, calling her an "abyss." "I have not signed off on any of those songs," he said, "so it would be a real big problem."

It's not clear whether Corgan (who also contributed to 1998's *Celebrity Skin*) truly has the ability to block the release of "Samantha," "PCH" and other songs he helped write. "It's an unlitigated issue," says a top music attorney, Peter Paterno, who suspects the law would favor Love. But while Love's management and label declined to comment, the singer remains concerned – as she discusses the issue and her once-romantic relationship

with Corgan, she eventually begins to weep.

Love suggests that she and the Smashing Pumpkins frontman will someday reconcile: "I love the man – Billy did wonderful things," she says. "No matter how pissy he wants to get, this is the cycle [of our relationship]." (For his part, Corgan said their friendship is "permanently off.") Love then brings up Corgan's current lifestyle, including his possible romantic relationship with Jessica Simpson. "He wanted to be Kurt, then he wanted to be [Marilyn] Manson, and now he wants to be Perez Hilton," she says. "What's wrong with just being Billy? The best Billy I can think of is the guy in the ZERO T-shirt who shaved his head and went, 'Fuck it.'"

Love spent more than five years working on *Nobody's Daughter*, which she intended to be as emotionally raw as Bob Dylan's *Blood on the Tracks*.



**"I feel like I dodged a bullet," says Love of her recent woes. "And I'm grateful."**

"Don't try to win/It will only end in disgrace," she sings on the elegiac title track. Midway through recording the album, she decided to use the name

Hole, despite the absence of co-founder Eric Erlandson or any other original members; the change helped focus the project. "It made a big psychological difference," Love says.

Late last year, Love lost custody of her daughter, Frances Bean Cobain, and a judge issued a restraining order keeping the two apart. But Love says that the rift is almost resolved. "Whatever problems we are allegedly having right now, trust me, they're really not that bad," she says. "She's going to the college that we both want her to go to, and it's OK."

Meanwhile, Hole have four U.S. shows booked in April, followed by a European tour. "If we sell out three nights at [London's] Brixton, what my label president thinks is that we'll be at Wembley by November," Love says. "And if we're at Wembley by November, we'll be at [Madison Square] Garden by Christmas."

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### Federal Offense

(1) Wiseguys co-owners Kristofer Kirsch (left) and Kenneth Lowson leaving court. The crew used high-tech software to score prime Phish (2) and Springsteen (3) tickets.

### SCALPING

[Cont. from 15] to scalping in different ways in recent years. Trying to shut off scalping entirely, acts such as Miley Cyrus and AC/DC have adopted “paperless ticketing,” requiring fans to show ID and credit cards to get into the venue; taking the opposite strategy, Madonna, Britney Spears and others have priced their best seats so high that scalpers don’t have room to raise them higher. Both strategies are central ideas for Irving Azoff, an engineer of February’s merger agreement between top promoter Live Nation and ticket-selling giant Ticketmaster.

Using specialized computer software called “bots,” the Wiseguys were able to get 1,497 tickets to three Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band shows at Giants Stadium in July 2008, and 2,500 tickets to Phish’s three Hampton Coliseum shows a year ago in Virginia. Then they resold those seats – and tickets to shows by Billy Joel, Dave Matthews

and Kelly Clarkson – to brokers around the country. “The bots are real,” says Andy Cirzan, vice president of Chicago promoter Jam Productions. “They can be programmed to look for seats in only certain locations. It’s pretty scary, and impossible for human beings to compete against.”

Wiseguy Tickets allegedly paid programmers in Bulgaria \$1,000 to \$1,500 a month

**“Bots are impossible for human beings to compete against,” says one promoter.**

to write a variety of programs. They set up a “nationwide network of computers,” according to the indictment, which pulled up thousands of Ticketmaster web pages at once. The bots used optical-character-recognition software to plug in the randomly generated security words that Ticketmaster uses to stave off bulk buyers. Another program automatically

filled in names, addresses and credit-card numbers; this data was real, courtesy of the 150 brokers the Wiseguys sold the tickets to. The Wiseguys allegedly charged brokers from \$20 to \$1,000 more than face value; brokers marked up the tickets even higher and resold them. In prosecuting the case, says U.S. Attorney Paul J. Fishman, “we’re ensuring that the markets, whether they’re for financial securities or concert tickets, are fair.”

Three of the four Wiseguys have pleaded not guilty (the fourth has not yet been arraigned). Mark Rush, attorney for CEO Kenneth Lowson, insists that no U.S. law prevents companies from buying tickets online in bulk. “There was no hacking, there was no theft of computer information, there was no tying up of Ticketmaster’s sys-

tems,” he says. In fact, it’s hard to determine whether the act is illegal. “The laws were written before the Internet,” says Washington, D.C., intellectual-property attorney Megan Gray. Even Fishman won’t say, noting his fraud charges rest instead on the Wiseguys’ alleged shenanigans with credit cards and multiple addresses. Still, Ticketmaster won an \$18.2 million judgment in 2007 against a scalper called RMG Technologies for violating its website terms.

Ticketmaster wouldn’t comment for this story, but Jeremy Short, a former employee who is now director of operations for Denver competitor TicketHorse, says security methods can be surprisingly low-tech. For example, online ticket sellers assign employees to watch online “shopping carts” to determine how many people are reserving tickets. (They also limit the number of shoppers at any given time so they don’t have to monitor 18,000 arena seats at once.) But what might really slow down the bots is the threat of litigation – or jail time. “Busting these guys is a great step,” says Dennis Arfa, agent for Billy Joel, Metallica, Rod Stewart and others. “Because sometimes I think we all look at each other and go, ‘How did they get the tickets?’ Well, this is one of the answers.”



### LADY GAGA FEAT. BEYONCÉ

#### “Telephone” video

Prison fights, girl-on-girl make-outs and mass murder: All in a day’s work! Beyoncé gets her Pam Grier on, and Gaga herself rocks a pair of sunglasses made out of cigarettes. Tarantino-y!

### MGMT

#### “Flash Delirium”

So it’s not the synth-party anthem we expected – but we still dig this Zombies-meet-Of Montreal jam: It’s groovy enough to justify these bros’ taste in designer dashikis.

### BRIGHT EYES AND NEVA DINOVA

#### “Happy Accident”

Ancient Nebraskan mystics can tell the difference between Bright Eyes and Conor Oberst songs – they meditate on the vibrations from Conor’s eyelashes – but the rest of us have to take the man’s word for it.

### T.I.

#### “I’m Back”

Lil Wayne goes in, T.I. comes out: Swaggering over a theremin-enhanced beat, the fresh-out-of-prison King of the South sounds ready to reclaim his throne. It’s the best post-lockdown jam since Britney’s “Piece of Me.”

### NEON INDIAN

#### “Sleep Paralyist”

When the going gets weird, the weird turn pro. Alan Polomo moves from ironic synth disco to the real thing – think a Düsseldorf video-game arcade circa 1982.

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# Higher Education: The Dead Donate Archives to University

New York exhibit offers first look at massive research collection

By David Browne

FOR MORE THAN 40 years, the Grateful Dead have attracted some of the most obsessive fans in rock & roll. But now, with a new exhibit of Dead artifacts at the

## PREVIEW

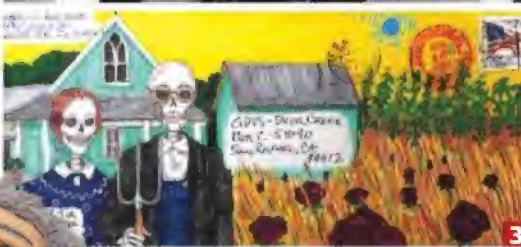
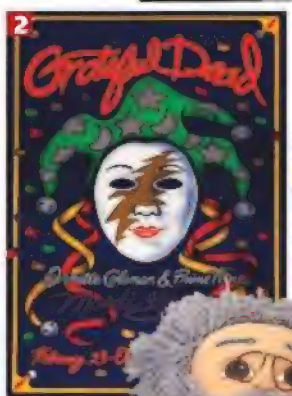
New-York Historical Society and a massive research library opening at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 2011, the Dead's pioneering music and self-sufficient business model are attracting major interest from academics.

"The Dead archives are an important part of the history of rock and the Sixties," says UCSC music professor Fred Lieberman, an expert on Asian music who co-authored three books with Dead drummer Mickey Hart. "The archive as a whole is important to scholars."

The exhibit (it runs through July 4th) is the first large-scale public peek into the legendary Dead archive – highlights include the band's 1968 renewal contract with Warner Brothers (for \$30,000), sketches for its Wall of Sound PA system, three of the skeleton marionettes from the "Touch of Grey" video and "Dick's Picks" concert archivist Dick Latvala's detailed notebooks and tape boxes.

The school is in the midst of renovating its library – due to reopen in 2011 – to accommodate a room ("Dead Central") that will be devoted to Dead exhibits and research materials.

The archive unofficially began in 1972, when Dead staff member Eileen Law began stashing away goodies in a closet. "People would say, 'I don't want to deal with this,' so I used to go through the trash," says



## From the Vaults

The archives of the Grateful Dead (1) include original posters from special shows, like a 1993 gig with Ornette Coleman (2), elaborate fan art sent to the group's offices (3) and prototypes for band merch, like a Jerry Garcia doll (4), which was never officially manufactured.

Law. Hart recalls a pitch for Dead watches: "I used to throw 'em against the wall to see if they still ticked," he says. "Then I'd say, 'Nah, this won't make it.' Eileen picked all that stuff up."

After the Dead finally closed their offices in 2006, the band put out word that it would consider donating the materials. The group settled on Santa Cruz partly because of the school's progressive reputation and long-held love for the Dead – Lieberman has taught a course on the band, and UCSC's radio station has an all-Dead show.

The exhibit is an amazing look inside the band's career – but it also serves a practical purpose. UCSC needs to raise \$2 million for operating

costs, and hopes the exhibition will help bring in donors. "If you show what you've got," says the university's head of special collections, Christine Bunting, "hopefully that will stimulate people to contribute."

Fans and scholars aren't the only ones who may be trekking to "Dead Central" when it opens: Guitarist Bob Weir plans to use the collection to jog his memory for an autobiography. "If you want to know how the Dead was built, this is where you would go," says Hart. "You'll see how we put the business together. You'll find out the hopes and dreams of a bunch of weirdos that were blindly going someplace together. The archive tells the whole story." **TS**

## TRIBUTES

### Mark Linkous of Sparklehorse

1962-2010



Singer Mark Linkous, whose fragile melodies and hushed vocals defined the sound of indie-rock band

Sparklehorse, committed suicide on March 6th outside a friend's home in Knoxville, Tennessee. Linkous, who was 47, shot himself in the heart. Sparklehorse had one minor hit, 1996's "Someday I Will Treat You Good," but Linkous' records won him fans like PJ Harvey and Tom Waits. "When I first heard Mark's music, it was like discovering a golden spider who left his initials for you in the web," says Waits, who sang on Sparklehorse's 2001 tune "Dog Door." "He was like his music: kind, strange, thoughtful and somewhat of a riddle." Linkous most recently teamed with Danger Mouse and David Lynch for *Dark Night of the Soul*, an LP with guest vocals from Iggy Pop, Julian Casablancas and the Cardigans' Nina Persson. He also was very troubled, with a history of depression and drug problems. In 1996, Linkous overdosed on Valium and antidepressants while on tour in London; the incident left him in a wheelchair for six months. "I got the sense that he felt like he made the world ugly," says Cracker's David Lowery, who played on two Sparklehorse LPs. "I think he was trying to compensate by making beautiful music." **MARK KEMP**

### Ron Banks of the Dramatics

1951-2010

Ron Banks, a founding member of 1970s R&B group the Dramatics, died of a heart attack on March 4th in Detroit. He was 58. His memorable falsetto powered the group's soul classics "In the Rain" and "Whatcha See Is Whatcha Get." The group's lushly orchestrated songs were later sampled by many hip-hop acts. In 1993, Snoop Dogg recruited the Dramatics to sing on his hit "Doggystyle World." "They all had unique voices, but Ron was the one people knew," says soul songwriter Kenny Gamble. "And Ron kept the Dramatics together. Unfortunately, they never got the exposure they deserved." **ANDY GREENE**



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**HERE IT GOES AGAIN** OK Go's Andy Ross, Kulash, Tim Nordwind and Dan Kanopka (from left) filming the video for "This Too Shall Pass." It took two days – and around 60 tries – to get a perfect take.

## Internet Made Them Video Stars: YouTube Kings OK Go Score Again

As the power-poppers' new clip goes viral, they split with their label

By David Browne

**F**OUR YEARS AFTER OK Go scored a viral smash with their video for "Here It Goes Again" (the "treadmill" clip was viewed over 50 million times), the L.A. power-pop foursome have another hit: "This Too Shall Pass," which

### MUSIC VIDEOS

debuted March 1st and drew 6.4 million YouTube views in a week. "We make cool shit," says singer-guitarist Damian Kulash of the clip, which features a massive and incredibly complicated Rube Goldberg-like device: bowling balls career down ramps; hammers smash TVs; and Kulash is catapulted out of a human sling-shot. "It was a pretty awesome machine," Kulash adds. "Like a Tom and Jerry mousetrap."

To make the video, the band hired California-based engineering firm Syyn Labs, which designed and built the two-story contraption. The video had to be captured in one

take, but the setup was so elaborate on the first day of filming, that something went wrong – a crashing piano set off mousetraps prematurely; steel balls rolled off tracks – in each of the 47 tries. On Day Two, however, the band nailed three complete takes. "Every time we watch it, there's a moment of panic," says Syyn Labs' Adam Sadowsky. "We're still not sure if various things are going to operate."

To help with the video's six-figure budget, the band recruited insurance giant State Farm to fund a portion of the shoot. As part of the arrangement, two State Farm plugs – like a toy truck with the company's logo – pop up in the clip.

Since releasing their first album, in 2002, OK Go have become better known for their videos than for their music: Their latest album, *Of the Blue Colour of the Sky*, has sold only 25,000 copies since it came out in January. But the group has benefited in other ways. Manager Jamie Kitman says the band's YouTube popularity has led to "greater ticket sales, bigger offers for concerts and festivals, and greater interest in licensing our songs. And more

people means more merch." OK Go's label, EMI, hasn't found a way to cash in on the phenomenon. In March, the band announced it was leaving the label to go indie. "EMI has failed to view the Internet as part of the music-selling business," says Kitman. "The future arrived earlier than we expected, where bands will be their own labels and will go to nonmusic corporations to fund their videos." (Responds EMI, "We've really enjoyed our relationship with OK Go. They've always pushed creative boundaries and broken new ground.")

Under the terms of the split, the band will retain the *Of the Blue Colour of the Sky* masters and reissue the LP on its own indie label, Paracade. And it's also brainstorming ideas for more videos – one for each of *Colour's* tracks. "When you've got 13 songs that span a wide range of emotions, it's easy to find a video idea," says Kulash.

"We're not a band in a traditional sense," he adds. "There's a presumption that the definitions of a band are really strict. But things don't have to be the same way they were 40 years ago."

## IN THE NEWS

### Spider-Man Show Loses Biggest Star

**Evan Rachel Wood** has dropped out of *Spider-Man, Turn Off the Dark*, leaving the troubled Broadway musical without a Mary Jane. Wood cited scheduling difficulties. Her departure is one of many setbacks for the production, which was supposed to begin previews in February. The show features music and lyrics by **Bono** and the **Edge** and is being directed by *The Lion King's* **Julie Taymor**, but production shut down last summer over cash flow; the budget is expected to exceed \$50 million. "I'm really happy with the music and the script," the Edge said in January. "[But] it's kind of frustrating that it's taking so long."

### Rock Hall of Fame Opens Archives

In late 2010, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum will open a 22,500-square-foot research library on the campus of Cleveland's Cuyahoga Community College. The facility will house the biggest collection of rock research materials in the world: song manuscripts, thousands of sound and video recordings, and the personal papers of record executives including **Clive Davis**, **Jerry Wexler** and **Ahmet Ertegun**. "When writers, students and filmmakers need to do research, our archives will be their first stop for primary sources," says Andy Leach, Hall of Fame director of library and archives.

## IN BRIEF

■ The **Foo Fighters** have begun demo'ing songs for their seventh album, which they'll record with *Nevermind* producer Butch Vig. "I think this could be our heaviest album yet," says **Dave Grohl**.

■ **Jane's Addiction** bassist **Eric Avery** has left the band – and a source confirms that **Duff McKagan**, of **Guns n' Roses** and **Velvet Revolver**, has begun recording new material with the group.



FROM LEFT: EDWIN ROSES; STEVE THORNE/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES

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# Muse Take New York, With Lasers

The trio's bombastic U.S. tour is packing arenas nationwide  
By Josh Eells

**H**OURS BEFORE SHOW-time, Muse frontman Matthew Bellamy is sipping hot tea on a dark, half-assembled Madison Square Garden stage. Actually, he's above the stage—atop a 12-foot-tall, hydraulic-powered platform that will be his home for the evening. "It's quite precarious

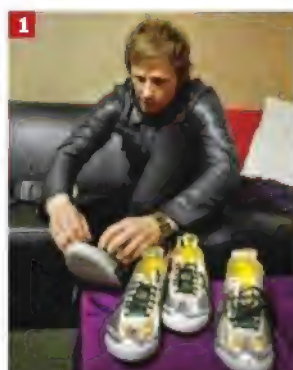
## Muse

March 5th, 2010, Madison Square Garden, New York

up here," he says, peering over the edge. "If you were to fall, you could very well break your leg. Or even your neck." He looks around the arena. "Should we test out the lasers, then?"

Muse have never been afraid to be a little over the top. The trio conquered the globe with their bombastic brand of proggy, Queen-style space rock. It took the States a while to catch on, but now, on the strength of their fifth album, *The Resistance* (which debuted in September at Number Three), they're mounting their biggest U.S. tour yet—featuring stops in 19 cities, a headlining Coachella slot and an elaborate, 1984-inspired set whose price tag Bellamy puts at around \$2 million. "Before, we've always left the big stuff in Europe," says drummer Dominic Howard. "It's nice to bring the bells and whistles over here and say, 'Look how we roll!'"

For all the firepower out front, the scene backstage couldn't be calmer. The entirety of their rider—a fruit basket, two packs of gum, an unopened bottle of Grey Goose, some extra boxers, etc.—fits on a small table. Bassist Christopher Wolstenholme sits smoking an old wooden tobacco pipe. "This blend is called Raven's Nest," he says. "I haven't smoked weed since I was 15, so it's kind of like being very, very mildly stoned." Bellamy, meanwhile, spends the afternoon reading a book on evolution by English biologist Richard Dawkins and



## British Invasion

Muse are in the middle of their biggest U.S. tour yet. (1) Drummer Dominic Howard tries on new sneakers backstage. (2) Howard and frontman Matt Bellamy on their \$2 million stage. (3) The band takes a backstage puff. (4) Bassist Chris Wolstenholme, Bellamy and Howard at MSG.



schooling a visitor on one of his favorite left-libertarian causes, a radical revolution in property rights. ("If it's not addressed," he says, "it could tip in an incredibly chaotic fashion—especially in a country like America, where guns are legal.")

In the arena, the lights go down on a sold-out crowd. As the band sprints through hits like "Supermassive Black Hole," from the *Twilight* soundtrack, and the six-minute "Knights of Cydonia," a spectacular blur of flashing lights, smoke jets and lasers mirrors the sound. Bellamy, in a sparkly silver suit, is

everywhere at once, banging away on a glowing grand piano and climbing the wings with his guitar. "Playing live is one of the few things in life where you're living totally for the moment," he says backstage. "It's kind of like an addiction."

After the show, the band's dressing room has a celebratory air. Word just arrived that Muse's new single, "Resistance," will top next week's alt-rock radio chart, and a parade of label big shots come through to pay respects. In the corner, Howard and Bellamy seem tired but happy, sipping

beers and chatting with two sweet-faced older ladies. "This is my mum!" Howard says. "And this is my mum!" says Bellamy. Their mothers flew in from England for a few days, and the sons are regaling them with afterparties and dinner at Robert De Niro's steakhouse.

"For many years, we accepted that nothing was going to happen in America," Wolstenholme says. "The other day in D.C., I got recognized by, like, six people." He takes a long puff on his pipe. "It's nice to feel like America's caught up with everywhere else."

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## Lilith Fair Hits the Road Again in 2010

Kelly Clarkson, Mary J. Blige, Ke\$ha and others top revamped fest's bill

By Steve Knopper

**W**HEN SARAH McLachlan launched the all-women Lilith Fair in 1997, it was competing with six other traveling music festivals: Lollapalooza, Ozzfest, Warped, H.O.R.D.E., Smokin' Grooves and Fur-

### TOUR BIZ

thur. When Lilith returns this summer for a 28-date trek through amphitheaters, with headliners Mary J. Blige, Kelly Clarkson, Norah Jones, Sheryl Crow, McLachlan and others, only Warped remains on the road. "It's a good time

big of a cross section, as far as R&B and folk and rock," Crow, a headliner then and now, tells ROLLING STONE. "It's so exciting to see such a massively diverse group of women."

The tour, which has yet to release a full schedule or ticket prices, will showcase 11 artists per city according to a rotating schedule, with McLachlan playing every date. (The July 17th show in Chicago, for example, will feature Clarkson, Blige, Cat Power and Heart.) Kevin Lyman, who produces the Warped Tour, predicts strong sales: "The lineup's pretty good," he says. "There's a little bit of that history with Lilith there, but there are so many young artists that are part of that tour."

Lilith Fair grossed over



**LADIES FIRST** Bonnie Raitt and Crow (above) at the last Lilith Fair, in 1999. Right: 2010 headliner Clarkson.



for a traveling festival for exactly that reason – there aren't any out there," says McLachlan. "The traveling festivals lost their luster, their excitement. I'm sure people will say, 'Oh, God, [Lilith] is coming back again.' But whatever. *I'll* enjoy it."

The new Lilith is similar to the Nineties original – showcasing artists from indie rock (Tegan and Sara), country (Loretta Lynn, Sugarland), R&B (Erykah Badu) and pop (Ke\$ha). "This is what the original Lilith tour was trying to be, but you didn't have as

\$65 million from 1997 to 1999, more than any other pop or rock festival during those years, according to *Pollstar*. "We did it for three years, and we were all pretty exhausted by the end of it," McLachlan says. "All of a sudden, 10 years passed. We kind of started to miss it. The nostalgia level was so great."

Additional reporting by  
DAVID BROWNE



**STONE COLD**  
Eric Kretz, Weiland,  
Dean DeLeo (back)  
and Robert DeLeo  
(from left)

## STP Return With Heavy Riffs, '90s Vibe

**Hit reunion tour leads to Scott Weiland and Co.'s first album in nine years**  
By Steve Appleford

**W**HEN THE STONE Temple Pilots began recording their first new album since 2001, Scott Weiland wanted to work alone, so he tracked his vocals in the privacy of his Lavish Studios in Burbank,

### IN THE STUDIO

**Album** Stone Temple Pilots  
**Due Out** May 25th

California, miles away from the rest of the band. "I'm comfortable singing here," Weiland says. "I don't like when everyone is inside the studio room listening to what I'm doing."

The other members of STP weren't exactly excited about the arrangement. "It's a certain challenge," says bassist Robert DeLeo. "But there is always a compromise to being in a band."

This time around, however, the group seems to be willing to compromise for the sake of its future. The grunge-era band never officially split up, but it drifted out of action in 2002 after infighting, mostly over Weiland's recurring struggles with drugs. But after Weiland left the supergroup Velvet Revolver in 2008, STP reunited for a summer tour -

and it went so well that they started writing new material during soundchecks.

The band regrouped in February 2009 to start working on the self-produced *Stone Temple Pilots*, which manages to conjure up the sound and vibe of STP's best Nineties work: twisty Led Zep-style guitar riffs from Dean DeLeo, throaty choruses and cool, unexpected flashes of Beatles psychedelia. "Since it was our first record in a long time, it would be back-to-basics rock & roll," says Weiland. Adds Robert DeLeo, "I asked myself, 'What does STP mean to me?' The answer is strapping it on and kicking it out. That's what excites me about being in this band."

The first new track STP recorded, "Huckleberry Crumble," delivers that punch with thick, Seventies-style stop-start boogie riffs. "Between the Lines" sounds like a British Invasion-era pop single gone grunge, with lyrics about the collapse of Weiland's marriage: "I like it when we talk about love/Even when we used to take drugs."

"There are a lot of things that are really sacred to me that I won't put out there," says Weiland, who is set to release an autobiography (co-authored by David Ritz) later this year. "But you can get the same point across by using metaphors and making it universal."

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# daughtry: from dream to reality

In four short years, Daughtry went from the dream of a music career to the reality of superstardom—a record deal and two #1 albums, plus an upcoming tour for their platinum sophomore album, *Leave This Town*. Here's how the guys from Daughtry live their dream.



## WHAT IS DAUGHTRY WORKING ON NOW?

Right now, we're very focused on our live show. We give our heart and soul every single night on that

stage! We want that 2-hour show to feel like a complete escape from reality. We're looking forward to this tour probably more than any other we've done. We've worked hard up to this point and we're enjoying ourselves. This is what we worked for.

## WHAT IS THE BAND'S PROCESS FOR CREATING MUSIC?

To break it down...most of the time, Chris is coming up with the melodies. Josh and Brian are great at producing and hearing the "ear candy"—the hooky choruses and the melody flow. Joey comes up with really cool string parts and J.P.'s got the beats. We get in a room and jam out ideas together. That's the real upshot of writing with the band, it's very creative and takes it to another level.

## WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR DOWNTIME?

We spend so much time together—a lot of it on the bus. We are always watching movies, making each other laugh, wrestling, playing the PlayStation®3... and of course sleeping.

## HOW DO YOU STAY IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FANS?

Twitter is the best way to give the fans a true glimpse into our daily lives, and they seem to love it! We get awesome responses and even gifts. Chris tweeted once that he was eating a lot of his favorite candy. Shortly after that, we pretty much received a lifetime supply.

**DAUGHTRY IS (FROM LEFT)  
CHRIS DAUGHTRY - VOCALS,  
JOSH STEELY - GUITAR, BRIAN  
CRADDOCK - GUITAR, JOEY BARNES  
-DRUMS, JOSH PAUL - BASS.**

Daughtry's new album, *Leave This Town*, is available everywhere now. [daughtryofficial.com](http://daughtryofficial.com)

# Best New Bands 2010

For more hot new artists - and candid photos from the road - turn the page and open foldout



Nicholas Shuminsky, Sprangers, Scott Wells and Geoff Bucknum (from left)

BEST  
NEW  
POWER  
POP

## Free Energy

**Philly band cranks out feel-good rock & roll**

**WHO** The first straight-up rock band signed to DFA Records, the disco-punk label headed by LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy. But don't expect Free Energy to change their Marshall-stack-worshipping ways. "We're not trying to hide behind being cool or clever," says frontman Paul Sprangers. "We want to reclaim clichés and just own them."

**SOUND** On their Murphy-produced debut, *Stuck on Nothing* (out now digitally; on CD in May), the band brings the glammy, arena-rock side of the Seventies radio dial back to life: Thin Lizzy, T. Rex, Cheap Trick. "If you could take any moment of an AC/DC song and stretch it out forever," says guitarist Scott Wells, "that would be, like, heaven."

**KEY TRACK** The skyrocketing twin-guitar melodies of "Hope Child" were inspired by an unlikely source: the Juicy Fruit gum jingle.

JOSH EELLS



Frontman Sprangers onstage in New York in January



Shuminsky and Scott Wells at a friend's cabin in Portland, Oregon. "The bathing suit is ladies' choice," says Wells.



Shuminsky, Sprangers, Bucknum, Evan Wells and Scott Wells (clockwise from left) in L.A. "We got into this giant flowerpot outside our hotel," says Scott.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CASS BIRD; COURTESY OF FREE ENERGY; & KYLE DEAN REINFORO. BOTTLE CAP: ISTOCK PHOTO

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BEST  
JAM  
BAND

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## Road warriors mix tough riffs with pop hooks

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PATRICK DOYLE

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Benny Yurco and Potter

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PUNK  
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Guitarist and violinist Amy Klein takes a break during rehearsals.



Stickles and Eric Harm at their favorite bar in New Jersey



"We were letting off steam after recording with [Grizzly Bear's] Chris Taylor," says Palomo.



Palomo (right) with bandmates Leanne Macomber and Ronnie Gierhart in New York

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K.O.



Rome backstage



Fending off the ladies outside the club

Matt Ochoa, Jon Olazabal, Watson, Bushnell and David Foral (from left)

"Corona is our pre-show beer of choice," says Bushnell (right) with Watson.

**BEST REGGAE ROCKERS**

## The Dirty Heads

### Cali dudes deliver mellow skankin' grooves

**WHO** Surfing, hard-partying SoCal bros who are reviving Sublime-style reggae rock with the surprise radio hit "Lay Me Down" - which features their pal Rome, the new singer for the actual Sublime. "Maybe that sound died out in other spots, but in California it never died," says vocalist Jared Watson. "Sublime influenced us a lot. A very lot. But I don't want to copy them 100 percent."

**SOUND** On their April release, *Any Port in a Storm*, Watson and the band's other frontman, guitarist Dustin Bushnell, slide between harmonizing on pop hooks, rapping like

the Beastie Boys (or maybe 311) and trading reggae toasts like Michigan and Smiley, a key influence. "It's two dudes kind of rap-reggae'ing over some cool reggae beats," says Bushnell. "That's where we started developing our style."

**GANJA WARS** Despite the group's dubby, obviously THC-laced sound, Bushnell claims to be the only band member who smokes pot: He wakes-and-bakes daily. But Watson begs to differ. "Dustin is such a dick," he says. "I smoke weed - just not as much weed as Dustin. But I can drink a lot more than he can."

**KEY TRACK** "Lay Me Down" was written by a very stoned Bushnell and Rome in four hours. **BRIAN HIATT**



Watson, Rome and Bushnell (from left) warming up before a concert

**B.O.B**

**BEST STONER MC**

### Hip-hop eccentric sings, plays guitar, loves crystals

**WHO** Atlanta-bred MC who was signed by T.I. while still in high school. "I came back to school that Monday with a glow," B.o.B recalls. His debut LP, *The Adventures of Bobby Ray*, is out April 27th, led by the swooning single "Nothin' on You," which is already a radio hit.

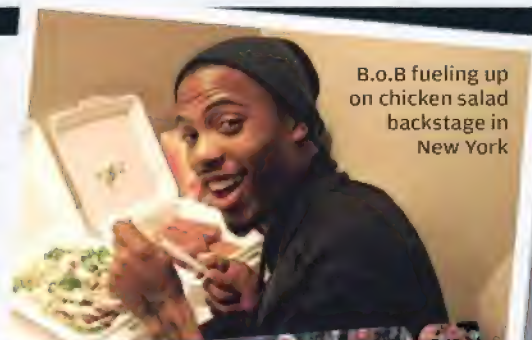
**SOUND** A giddy hodgepodge of philosophically inclined stoner rhymes, gospel-inflected singing (his father is a pastor) and sounds cribbed from reggae and rock (he's not half-bad on guitar). It's a freewheeling (and gangsta-free) style

that nods to André 3000 and Cee-Lo. "I like to say I'm from Jupiter," B.o.B says.

**NEW AGE MC** He collects crystals and stones. "You start feeling the energies and vibrations," he says. His prized possession is a chunk of Brazilian quartz: "I'm such a hippie. I need to start wearing an LSD-dipped bandanna or something!"

**DREAM COLLABO** "I love Animal Collective. Their music is really psychedelic. And I believe that animals have a collective consciousness, so I like their name."

**KEY TRACK** "I'll Be in the Sky," a singsong-y, Gnarl-like tune inspired by B.o.B's frequent trips to church. **JONAH WEINER**



B.o.B fueling up on chicken salad backstage in New York



At a San Francisco gig in February

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K.O.

Stickles (left) and Graetzer in New York last New Year's Eve



# Mumford & Sons

BEST FOLK IMPORT

## U.K. neo-folk act gets loud with banjos, acoustic guitars

**WHO** Old-timey folk-rock act formed by singer Marcus Mumford and three guys who aren't his sons. It's already huge in Australia, where the band unseated Susan Boyle on the charts. An L.A. show attracted Jake Gyllenhaal and Benicio Del Toro.

**SOUND** For an acoustic act, Mumford and Sons shows are surprisingly rowdy, Appalachia-goes-Arcade Fire affairs. "I always thought acoustic music was chill - but I was so wrong," says organist Ben Lovett. "Bluegrass is the best dance music ever."

**BACKSTORY** The band got its start at Bosun's Locker, a tiny club under a London Cornish pasty shop. "It was only big enough to stand and drink one beer," says Lovett, laughing.

**BOOKWORM** Mumford runs an online book club (first read: *All the Pretty Horses*) and says he's inspired by mythology. "The Odyssey is as much folk music as 'House of the Rising Sun': It's specific to a time but lasts for generations," he says. "I'll never sing, 'I went to buy a Diet Coke.' I want my songs to last forever."

**KEY TRACK** When Mumford played "Little Lion Man" on *Letterman*, that night's guest Ewan McGregor requested tickets to their show.

MELISSA MAERZ

Bassist Ted Dwane



Frontman Mumford



Dwane riding his bass



Organist Lovett (front) with the band in Australia

"This is the rock that put the 'rock' in Glen Rock, New Jersey," says Stickles (second from left), with Graetzer, Amy Klein, David Robbins and Eric Harm



Palomo at the Echoplex in L.A. in November



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**Key Flavors: Roasty-Sweet, Chocolate**

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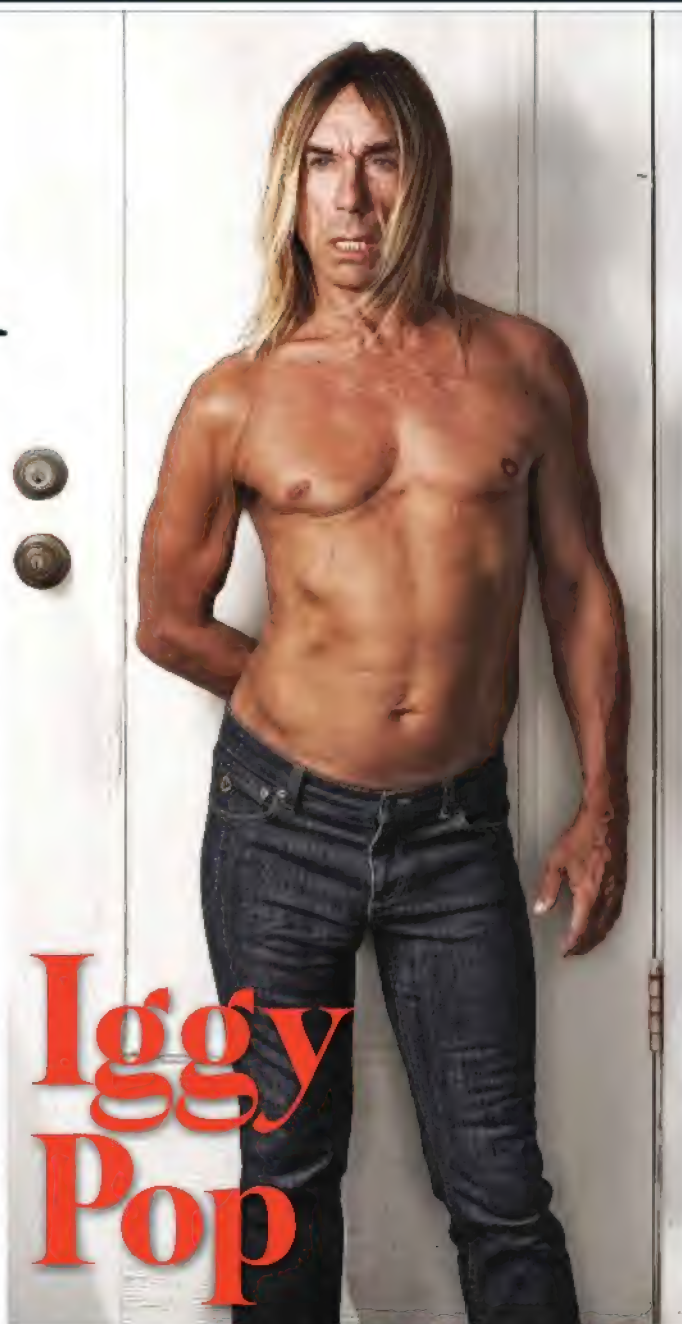
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**The punk godfather on stage-diving at Carnegie Hall, making 'Raw Power'**  
By Austin Scaggs

**A**FTER SEVEN REJECTIONS, the Stooges are finally members of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. "That's one more thing I can relax about before I croak," says the punk pioneers' 62-year-old frontman, Iggy Pop. There's another reason for Stooges fans to rejoice: In April, their 1973 punk masterpiece, *Raw Power* – produced by Iggy and mixed by Iggy and David Bowie – will get a deluxe reissue treatment, featuring all sorts of unreleased gems and live goodies, including a particularly nasty and combative 1973 gig at an Atlanta roadhouse. (At one point, Iggy taunts the crowd, "Do you wanna get your fuck-in' face punched in, you little cracker boy?") "I was on fire that night," Iggy boasts. The Stooges will continue to celebrate *Raw Power* this year with a string of special gigs featuring former guitarist James Williamson, who has stepped in for the late Ron Asheton. "James is the only member of the group who returns my e-mails," says Iggy. "He's motivated, and we're playing well."

*At the recent Tibet House benefit at Carnegie Hall, you stage-dived during "I Wanna Be Your Dog." Why?* Because in the center of the crowd, there were just these people looking at me. Standing there. I looked at them. They looked at me. I just thought, "I'm gonna jump 'em." So I did. They weren't bemused, or confused, or offended, or excited, they were just like, "What are you doing?!" When I landed, it hurt, and I made a mental note that Carnegie Hall would be a good place for my last stage dive.



**What was your first thought after you got the call about getting into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame?**

For the first 15 minutes, I thought of everybody that never liked me, and I thought, "How do you like me now?" Then it settled in, and I felt overwhelmed, a little bit choked up, angry and teary. . . .

**Almost 40 years ago, you recorded "Raw Power" in England with David Bowie. What was London like?**

The most civilized place I'd ever been. Everybody would get a little bottle of milk on their doorstep, and no one would steal each other's milk. It was very good milk. Rupert Murdoch hadn't bought the *Times* yet, so it was still published

**with the beautiful old typeface. Anorexia was in. We lived in a nice little neighborhood, with the Forum ABC movie theater on the corner and a little Turkish restaurant called Baghdad, where they'd play Neil Young records and sell you a joint. We thought we'd died and gone to heaven.**

**Where were you when you wrote the opening line of "Search and Destroy": "I'm a streetwalking cheetah with a heart full of napalm"?**

Under a big oak tree in Kensington Gardens, on the edge of Hyde Park. I wrote a lot of the lyrics there. There were green spaces where you could stretch out and have a little privacy. I went to Harrods and bought black silk pajamas and a pair

of carpet slippers, and they were so cool I just wore them all the time.

**What do you remember about the live show on the "Raw Power" reissue?**

I don't remember that specific night, but I remember that stand real well. One night, I was so hung over the band just threw me in the bushes in front of our motel. I never made it home. The next day I wasn't in shape to sing, so we were trying all these home remedies. I'm just hanging on to the mike, trying to get through a song, and a huge gorilla came out of the side door and grabbed me. It was Elton John pranking us.

**What music has stood the test of time?**

*Highway 61 Revisited* and *Bringing It All Back Home*. I always liked "Love Minus Zero/No Limit" – that's really beautiful. My favorite, though, is "Darkness at the break of noon, shadows even the silver spoon. . . ." That one, "It's Alright, Ma," is a killer song.

**Ever hang out with Dylan?**

Once, at a dinner at Yoko's, and again at a birthday party at Bob's place in Malibu. Don Was and Leonard Cohen dragged me out there. Bob was a good guy. I haven't heard it myself, but I heard on a "dog"-themed segment on his radio show he actually played "I Wanna Be Your Dog." [*Imitating Dylan*] "Here's one of the best dog songs ever written. . . ." That made my life, dude.

**Did you catch any of Leonard Cohen's recent shows?**

No, it was terrible, because the Stooges' European tour was three days behind him everywhere we went. We'd get to town and they'd say, "Leonard Cohen was fantastic and sensitive, and played for three hours!" I'd say, "Well, we're the Stooges, our typical song has 11 words, and after an hour and a quarter you'll want us to leave!"

**That's hilarious.**

Years ago, some girl wrote in the classifieds saying she was looking for a man "with the poetic sensitivity of Leonard Cohen and the raw power of Iggy Pop," so Leonard tried to get me to set up a three-way with her [*laughs*]. He said, "Dude, we can give her both!"

"I wear my placenta around my neck, because it's supposed to give you second sight." —Ke\$ha

# Random Notes

In Miami, Wayne got his last taste of ice cream cake — and freedom. Inset: At a Jay-Z show in New York.



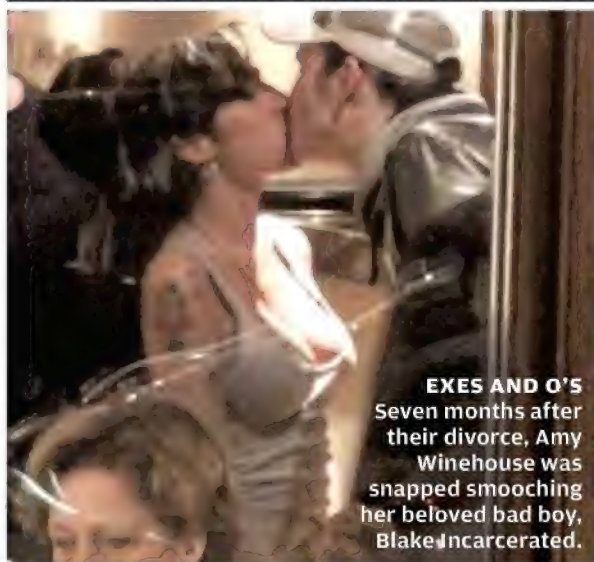
**THE FOO FAMILY**  
Dave Grohl doesn't need no stinking nannies, spending a hot afternoon in L.A. with wife Jordyn and babes Violet and Harper.



In the time it took for the cops to cuff him, Wayne wrote seven new tracks.

## Weezy's Last Blast

Weed dealers wept quietly and codeine-syrup sales plummeted as Lil Wayne was hauled off to Rikers Island to begin a one-year bid for gun possession. Weezy went out with a big bang, though. In Miami, he had a going-away party at the Fontainebleau, and in New York, he hopped onstage at a Jay-Z concert with Drake and Young Jeezy for the mixtape gem "I'm Goin' In." See ya in '11!



**EXES AND O'S**  
Seven months after their divorce, Amy Winehouse was snapped smooching her beloved bad boy, Blake, incarcerated.

**BIG EASY B-DAY**  
National treasure Fats Domino rang in number 82 in New Orleans with a cold booze-free brewski and a delicious strawberry cake.

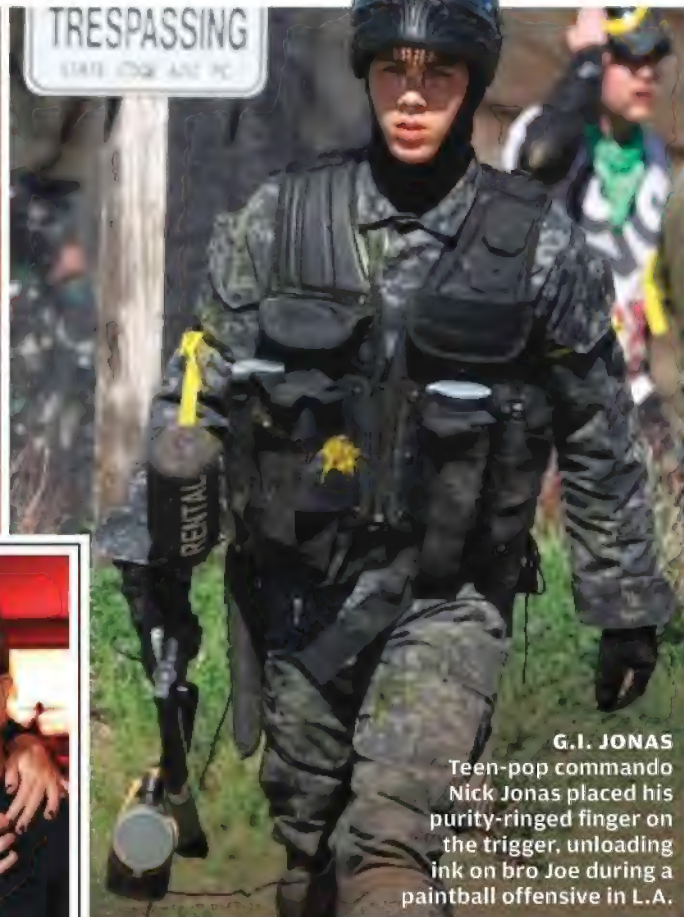


CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SETH BROWARNIK/STARTRAKSPHOTO.COM; DAVID COOPER/BROADIMAGE; ERIKA GOLDRING; XPOSUREPHOTOS.COM; MARC A. HERMANN/POLARIS; CARRIE SHALTZ/PATRICKMULLAN.COM/SIPA PRESS



#### LAMA-PALOOZA

Patti Smith, Iggy Pop and a bunch of monks chanted and rocked at the annual Tibet House benefit in New York.

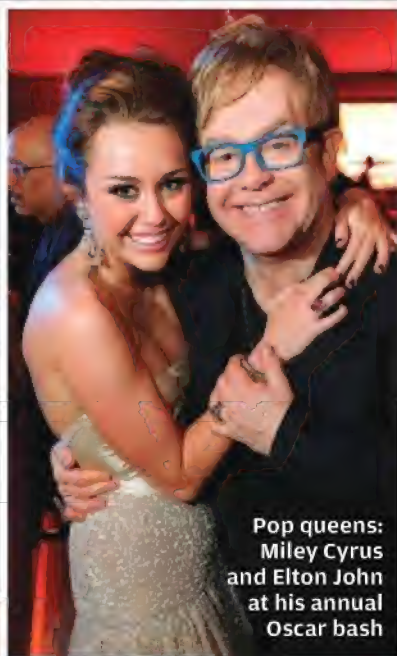


#### G.I. JONAS

Teen-pop commando Nick Jonas placed his purity-ringed finger on the trigger, unloading ink on bro Joe during a paintball offensive in L.A.



Sean Penn and Kid Rock discussed the merits of Hugo Chavez's regime at the Vanity Fair party. Not.



Pop queens: Miley Cyrus and Elton John at his annual Oscar bash



"The Weary Kind" songwriters Ryan Bingham and T Bone Burnett party with their muse.



#### CHOWDER HEAD

Always ahead of the curve, Lady Gaga models the hottest look of the summer, nouveau-crustacean, at Mr. Chow in London.

## Hollywood Goes Country

Jeff Bridges finally got his Oscar for his country-singin', whiskey-swigin' Bad Blake in *Crazy Heart*. Blake's theme song, "The Weary Kind," written by country outlaw Ryan Bingham and master producer T Bone Burnett, also took home top honors. Sometimes, the bums win!

# Workingman's Dread

'Breaking Bad' is TV's darkest – and greatest – view of the struggles of the American family man

By Rob Sheffield

**S**O YOU THOUGHT THAT *Breaking Bad* couldn't get any bleaker? It got bleaker. This is the grimmest depiction of American life in the history of television. It's the *Curb Your Enthusiasm* of meth-chef family dramas, wiping the floor with the other economic-crash shows – it's not quirky like *Weeds*, and it's not a corny Deuce Bigalow joke like *Hung*. *Breaking Bad* started

## Breaking Bad

Sundays, 10 p.m., AMC

from the premise that there's no place left in the country for a breadwinner to do an honest day's work and only grows darker as it explores the desert of the soul.

In the first season, Walter White, brilliantly played by Bryan Cranston, was an ordinary 50-year-old high school science teacher – until he finds out he has terminal lung cancer. He knows that when he dies, his wife, Skyler (Anna Gunn), will lose the house and have to raise their infant daughter alone. His teenage son has cerebral palsy (as does RJ Mitte, the actor who plays him). So Walter turns his genius for chemistry into a sideline as a meth chef.

One year later, Walter is still the finest crystal-meth cook in Albuquerque, New Mexico. But the guilt is making him snap. He's sitting by his pool when he suddenly throws his drug money on the backyard grill and pours lighter fluid over all those hundreds. As soon as he torches the loot, he panics and tries to put it out. He ends up setting his robe on fire, throwing a half-million bucks into the pool and jumping in after it. On *Breaking Bad* that's as close as you get to a light moment.

Understandably, Skyler leaves him when she finds out



he's a drug dealer. ("Manufacturer," he corrects her.) So he has nothing to gain except the hope of leaving a nest egg for his wife (who doesn't love him) and his son (who does) when he kicks off. As Bruce Springsteen would say, he's got debts no honest man can pay.

Like AMC's other genius series, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad* is about American husbands and their dark secrets. But the difference between *Bad*

and *Mad* is like the difference between speed and Stoli. *Breaking Bad* is not a social experience. It demands to be viewed alone, with the shades drawn. At its best, it's almost unwatchably great, as Walter lugs his guilty conscience around like his duffel bag full of cash. It's like witnessing some terrible karmic chemistry experiment gone haywire: For every awful action Walter makes there's an even more horrible reaction.

The story picks up with the fallout from last season, when Walter let his partner's girlfriend die of an overdose; her grieving father, an air traffic controller, let two planes collide over Albuquerque. Walter feels constant remorse over the crash, especially since everyone in town is wearing blue ribbons to commemorate the victims – even his fellow drug dealers. When his high school holds an assembly to discuss the tragedy, Walter gives a crazed speech about how it could have been worse: The planes were only two-thirds full, you know, and 737s don't hold as many passengers as 747s, and isn't it time to forget? "We move on," he says. "Because that's what human beings do. We survive."

Maybe, but surviving on *Breaking Bad* has its own terrible price. The punch comes from the way the show suggests that everyone has a secret life, whether that means sneaking down to the basement meth lab or creeping out to the living room to watch *Breaking Bad*. Walter's wife wants a divorce, but she has a few secrets of her own. So she can't break away clean any more than he can. Her attorney tells her, "You'd be amazed what I've seen partners hide from one another." That's what's so heartbreaking – Walter and Skyler keep secrets to protect each other, yet the secrets are ripping them apart.

*Breaking Bad* is firmly in the old-school tradition of the sentimental crime story – like Michael Corleone, Tony Soprano or Biggie Smalls, Walter is a sympathetic guy who wants to take care of his family, but by being strong for the family, he loses them. Yet there's never been a TV dad quite as agonizing to watch – so physically consumed with guilt and dread. Living up to his responsibilities, and living with the poor choices he's made, is destroying him faster than the cancer. Walter hasn't died yet – but on *Breaking Bad*, the only thing worse than dying of cancer is not dying of cancer.

## THE WATCH LIST

### Justified

Tuesdays, 10 p.m., FX

A standard cop show that feels like *Walking Tall* without the baseball bat or *Walker, Texas Ranger* without Mr. Charles Norris. It should be an aging action hero's retirement project. Timothy Olyphant is a bit green to play a backwoods lawman who does what he gotta do.

### The Ricky Gervais Show

Fridays, 9 p.m., HBO

This cartoon version of some hilarious podcasts adds style and color to Gervais' David Bowie-esque stash of funny voices. Plus: Partner in crime Stephen Merchant will always be the Brian Eno to Gervais' Bowie.

R.S.



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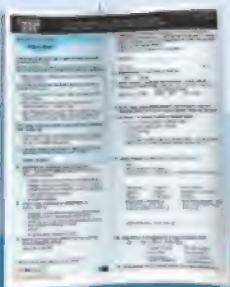


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**WASTED** A 2008 coal-ash spill in Tennessee was 100 times larger than the Exxon Valdez disaster.



# Coal's Toxic Sludge

It's deadly, barely regulated, and everywhere. Can Obama crack down on America's second-biggest river of industrial waste?

★ By Jeff Goodell ★

**B**IG COAL HAS SPENT MILLIONS of dollars over the past year touting the virtues of what the industry calls "clean coal," but it's no secret that coal is the dirtiest fossil fuel. When you burn it, coal releases monstrous quantities of deadly compounds and gases – and it all has to go somewhere. The worst of the waste – heavy metals like arsenic, cadmium and mercury, all of which are highly toxic – are concentrated in the ash that's left over after coal is burned or in the dirty sludge that's scrubbed from smokestacks. Each year, coal plants in the U.S. churn out nearly 140 million tons of coal ash – more than 900 pounds for every American – generating the country's second-largest stream of industrial waste, surpassed only by mining. If you piled all the coal ash on a single football field, it

would create a toxic mountain more than 20 miles high.

For decades, the industry has gotten away with dumping coal ash pretty much wherever it wants. It poured the stuff into vast lagoons, dumped it into mines, used it to pave roads, spread it on crops as fertilizer, even mixed it into everyday items like concrete, wallboard, vinyl flooring, bowling balls, potting soil and toothpaste. There are no federal regulations to speak of. Many states have minimal restrictions on where and how coal ash can be dumped, but the coal industry has a long history of buying off state regulators with a junket to Vegas and a few rounds of golf. In short, the industry had it made. Nearly 300 billion pounds of coal ash simply vanished from view each year, with less oversight than household garbage.

But all that changed just before 1 a.m. on December 22nd, 2008, when an earthen dam collapsed at a storage pond brimming with coal waste near Kingston, Tennessee. Within hours, a billion gallons of gray-black sludge had oozed into the once-lovely Emory River, destroying nearby homes and poisoning the water. It was the largest industrial disaster in American history, a flood of waste 100 times bigger than the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989. The cleanup of the river, which will take years to complete, is expected to cost as much as \$1 billion.

"The spill pulled back the curtain on a huge untold story that had never gotten much attention," says Bruce Nilles, director of a Sierra Club campaign called Beyond Coal. "Everyone had been focused on the problems with mountaintop-

removal mining and on the air pollution from burning coal. But after the dam at Kingston collapsed, it turned everyone's attention on the dangers of toxic coal ash."

There are currently 584 impoundments that store coal ash in 35 states, and the vast majority of the sites are not only unmonitored, they have no systems in place to keep the waste from leaking into groundwater. Studies by the Environmental Protection Agency found that toxic elements in coal ash can leach into drinking water at concentrations that far exceed federal safety standards. In 2007, the EPA estimated that some residents who live near unlined ash ponds run a risk of cancer from arsenic contamination as high as one in 50 – a level 2,000 times greater than the EPA's threshold for acceptable risk.

As it happened, the Senate confirmation hearing of EPA chief Lisa Jackson was held just a few weeks after the Kingston spill. When Obama's environmental watchdog was asked what she would do to protect the public from coal ash, Jackson indicated that it might be time to crack down on the industry's dirty secret. "The EPA currently has, and has in the past, assessed its regulatory options," she said. "I think it is time to re-ask those questions."

A year later, Jackson now appears poised to make good on that pledge. In the coming weeks, the EPA is expected to propose new rules laying out federal standards for how coal ash is stored, monitored and recycled. But the exact shape and substance of those rules remain uncertain – and nailing down the details may prove to be the clearest indication yet of whether the Obama administration is prepared to get tough with an industry it has left largely untouched. The White House Office of Management and Budget is currently reviewing a cost-benefit analysis of the rules – and big electric utilities are waging a furious last-minute lobbying campaign to keep them from being enacted. Sen. Evan Bayh, who accepted \$126,000 in campaign contributions from electric utilities last year alone, drafted a letter to the White House – signed by 26 of his fellow senators – urging the EPA to back off. The Western Governors' Association also weighed in, urging the administration to leave coal-ash regulation to the states.

"Environmental catastrophes like the Kingston spill can be opportunities for sweeping reform," says Eric Schaeffer, who served as the EPA's top enforcement official under Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. "For coal ash, this is the moment. We need to get this done."

*Contributing editor JEFF GOODELL is author of the forthcoming book "How to Cool the Planet: Geoengineering and the Audacious Quest to Fix Earth's Climate."*

**B**ACK BEFORE THE SPILL IN Kingston, I visited one of the nation's largest dumping grounds for coal waste – an impoundment site called Little Blue Run, near Shippingport, Pennsylvania. Little Blue Run is a huge, eerie lake filled with ash and sludge from FirstEnergy's Bruce Mansfield coal plant, a 2,490-megawatt giant that sits on the banks of the Ohio River. FirstEnergy recycles some of the scrubber sludge from the plant into wallboard, but the rest of it gets mixed with the coal ash and pumped through big steel pipes for seven miles and emptied into Little Blue Run. The sludge has a thick, pasty texture, but it's the color of the lake itself that's spooky: a luminous, metallic blue, with swirls of emerald green. Like the vast majority of waste ponds in America, Little Blue Run is unlined – meaning there is no barrier between this toxic metallic stew and the groundwater beneath it. According to a report by the National Research Council, coal ash typically contains 24 different pollutants – some

From the start, the coal industry has used its power to ensure that coal ash is not only unregulated by the EPA but not even classified as dangerous. The battle began in 1976, when Congress passed the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which for the first time called for federal standards on the handling of solid wastes. More important, the new law divided waste into two categories: hazardous waste, which is subject to federal regulation from cradle to grave, and nonhazardous waste, which is dealt with on a state-by-state basis. Thanks in part to the lobbying power of Big Coal, coal ash was placed in the "not worth regulating" category. Even more striking, Rep. Tom Bevill of Alabama – the son of a coal miner – pushed through an amendment requiring the EPA to conduct a study and publish a report to Congress prior to imposing *any* restrictions on coal ash as a hazardous waste.

An exemption from regulation may have protected the coal industry, but it didn't stop waste ponds and landfills from leak-

## Residents who live near unlined waste ponds run a risk of cancer 2,000 times greater than EPA standards allow.

of them deadly, even in minute quantities. In humans, the toxins in coal ash can cause cancer of the liver, kidney, lung and bladder, as well as neurological damage in children. In animals, especially fish and amphibians, they can cause developmental abnormalities. The sheer quantity of toxic metals produced by a big coal plant is mind-boggling. At Little Blue Run, for example, FirstEnergy pumps 81,000 pounds of arsenic compounds into the pond *every year*. In its undiluted form, a thimbleful will kill you.

Because coal ash has been unregulated for so long, nobody is sure how much coal ash is actually buried where, or what its impact really is. A decade ago, the EPA determined that there were 47 sites where rivers and groundwater had been polluted by heavy metals leaching out of coal-ash dumps. In January, the agency bumped it up to 71. The following month, environmental groups examined public data and found 31 more dumps that weren't on the EPA's list. At some, groundwater is contaminated with levels of arsenic 145 times higher than federal standards allow.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," says Jeff Stant, who directs a coal-ash initiative for the Environmental Integrity Project. "We don't really know what the risks are, because nobody has bothered to look into it very deeply."

By the 1990s, people who lived near impoundment sites began to notice a suspicious number of diseases and illnesses in their neighborhoods. A turning point in public awareness came in 2000, when high levels of benzene, a known carcinogen, were found in the drinking water of Pines, Indiana, a community next to a coal-ash landfill. Housing values fell, and parents of children born with hearing impairments and a rare bowel disorder began to wonder if coal ash was responsible. By 2004, the town was designated a toxic Superfund site.

During the Clinton administration, the EPA took its first hard look at coal ash. In March 2000, the agency concluded that "these wastes can, and do, pose significant risks to human health and the environment when not properly managed." But rather than officially designate coal ash as hazardous, the EPA offered the industry a deal. If polluters agreed to dump or recycle coal ash according to "tailored" federal standards, their waste would remain labeled as nonhazardous. If not, the EPA would step in and brand a company's coal ash as hazardous, prompting stricter oversight.

But that wasn't good enough for Big Coal. The proposal set off a lobbying frenzy by coal-burning utilities and the Utility Solid Waste Activities Group, the industry's front group on coal-ash disposal.

"The high costs of regulation," the group warned, "will ultimately be shared nationwide by employees, taxpayers, ratepayers, investors and customers." Citing an analysis it commissioned, USWAG claimed that the annual cost of regulating coal ash would be as high as \$13.8 billion – even though EPA data showed that proper disposal would cost no more than \$3.5 billion. The industry's numbers were "wildly excessive," says Andrew Wittner, who oversaw the EPA's assessment of coal ash during the Clinton years.

The scare tactics worked: Thanks to the lobbying campaign, even the Energy Department and the federal Office of Surface Mining came out in opposition to the EPA's proposal. In May 2000, coal ash was officially designated as "nonhazardous," allowing the states to deal with the toxic waste as they saw fit.

A year later, when Bush took office, the agency became even more industry-friendly. "He purged the EPA," says Wittner. "All interest in doing anything about coal ash stopped." The agency actively began suppressing information about the danger that coal waste posed to public health. It deleted references to coal ash's "high risk" potential from fact sheets and PowerPoint presentations, and blacked out key passages in documents released to environmentalists under the Freedom of Information Act. It sat on the damning results of a 2002 study, which found that residents near unlined waste ponds face a risk of cancer that is far higher than the level used to justify federal regulation. The EPA even formed an official "partnership" with industry trade groups like USWAG to promote the "beneficial use" of coal ash in everything from highways to carpets. The sweetheart deal allowed the industry to avoid the cost of dispos-

ing of coal ash as hazardous waste, while at the same time making a profit off its toxic mess. The working relationship between regulators and coal polluters was so close that – in an October 2008 e-mail to the EPA itself – one industry representative joked about being "in bed again" with the agency.

"EPA is supposed to be a regulatory agency," says Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a watchdog group composed of federal and state workers. "And regulatory agencies are not sup-

allowable levels, the material is listed as hazardous. "By this standard, coal ash is not a hazardous waste," says Jim Roewer, the head of USWAG.

But Conrad Volz, a professor of environmental and occupational health at the University of Pittsburgh who has studied the health impacts of coal ash, says the industry's view defies common sense and sound science: "Of course coal ash is a hazardous material. Anyone who says it is not is just playing legal games."

Even Roewer acknowledges that the leaching test doesn't do a very good job

## Under Bush, the EPA formed a "partnership" with industry to recycle coal waste into carpets and bowling balls.

posed to be in a 'products partnership' with the very industries that they are supposed to regulate."

**I**N THEIR LATEST LOBBYING BLITZ, coal-burning utilities and their allies continue to argue that putting stringent federal regulation on coal ash will cost billions of dollars, jack up electricity prices, destroy the economy, force the shutdown of coal plants and perhaps even cause blackouts. But they downplay the danger that coal ash poses to human health. USWAG insists that the way to determine if coal ash should be regulated as a hazardous waste is to use a test called the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure. Essentially, you put some coal waste in water, shake it up for 18 hours, then measure what leaches out of it. If the toxicity of the remaining junk exceeds

of mimicking the real world, where unlined ash ponds often result in sky-high levels of contamination. EPA scientists are developing another standard, called the Leaching Assessment Framework, which demonstrates that coal ash can be far more dangerous than the industry acknowledges. The real threat with coal ash occurs when the waste comes into contact with water, which mobilizes contaminants and carries them into streams, lakes and drinking water. "What is most important is not the amount of metal in the ash but its mobility," says Susan Thorneloe, a senior EPA scientist. According to recent tests conducted by Thorneloe, leaching levels of arsenic in some coal ash can run 1,800 times higher than the federal standard for drinking water. Even in scrubber sludge, which is supposedly safe to spread on crops and use in wall-

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: FLASH CITY.COM; ALAA AL-MARJANI/AP IMAGES; NO CREDIT; PAUL J. RICHARDS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; OPEN CREDIT; HYDROGRAPHY; BRIGITTE STELZER/STOCK PHOTO; ROLLING STONE; GORDON GRIGG/NEW SOUTH WALES DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT; SERGI SHALIMOV/ISTOCK PHOTO; DIGITALLY ALTERED BY "ROLLING STONE"

Reagan grandson busted on **pot** charges.

Joint Chiefs chairman issues **new rule**: Kill fewer civilians.

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World's **Greatest DAD**

U.S. backs trade ban on imperiled **bluefin** tuna.

D.C. and Mexico City both **begin licensing** same-sex marriages.

Providing balance to her Fox News gig, Sarah Palin shops **reality TV** series.

Chilean earthquake shortens days by **1.26 millionth** of a second.

DA clears ACORN workers in **pimp** hoax.

Tax evader Charles Rangel **steps aside** as chair of House tax committee.

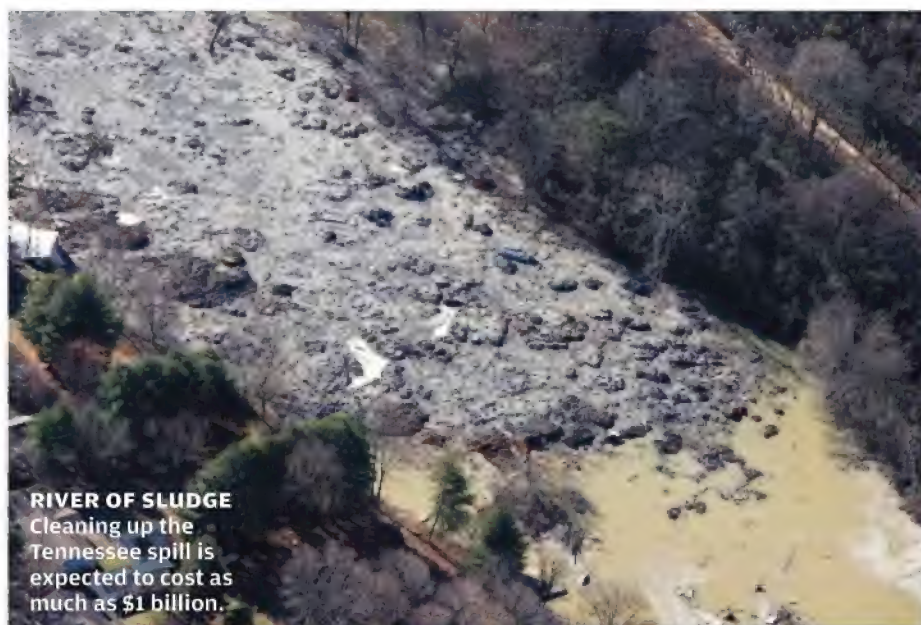
Colony of yellow-spotted bell frogs, thought to be **extinct**, discovered in Australia.

Swiss prostitutes being **trained in defibrillator** use.

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**THREAT ASSESSMENT**  
THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE SCARY

**WITH US**



**RIVER OF SLUDGE**  
Cleaning up the Tennessee spill is expected to cost as much as \$1 billion.

board, Thorneloe found contaminant levels of selenium more than 3,000 times higher than the federal standard for surface water.

But the EPA doesn't even need to rely on such tests to designate coal ash as hazardous – under federal law, it can look at the havoc that coal waste has already wreaked on public health and the environment. "There are over 100 cases where we have strong evidence of coal ash's impact on drinking water and surface water," says Lisa Evans, a former EPA enforcement attorney who now serves as senior administrative counsel for the environmental group Earthjustice. "By this standard, the EPA has more than enough evidence to list coal ash as a hazardous waste."

Evans points out environmentalists aren't trying to shut down Big Coal –


they're simply pushing the EPA to implement common-sense solutions that have been used for years in other industries, such as equipping waste ponds with a protective lining and then monitoring them for leakage. "We're not talking about men in hazmat suits every time a truck moves a load of ash," she says. "That's not what is required here." But that hasn't stopped the industry from engaging in the same scare tactics it has been employing for decades. USWAG claims that disposing of coal ash as hazardous waste will cost \$20 billion a year – a figure unsupported by any independent study. And companies that specialize in recycling coal ash into household items insist that tougher regulations will destroy what has become a lucrative business. "If coal ash is regulated as a hazardous material, it will kill the beneficial-use indus-

try," says Thomas Adams, executive director of the American Coal Ash Association. "If I'm trying to sell shingles with boiler slag in them, who is going to buy them? Nobody." Hilariously, the industry even argues that recycling coal waste in concrete and other building materials helps curb global warming by cutting down on carbon pollution.

The irony is, efforts to clear the air may actually increase the danger posed by coal waste. As coal plants clean up their smokestack emissions by installing scrubbers and other pollution-control devices, they are creating more and more sludge that contains all the nasty stuff that would have otherwise been spewed into the atmosphere. "Clean-coal technology is nothing but a code word for 'let's generate more waste than ever before,'" says Stant of the Environmental Integrity Project.

For the Obama administration, which has been so outspoken about using science to guide sound environmental policy, confronting coal ash should be a no-brainer. After all, the cost of safely disposing of coal waste is tiny compared to the long-term risk to public health: Left unregulated, the sludge will continue to leak toxic chemicals into America's drinking water for decades to come. But environmentalists aren't so sure that the EPA, which is already under fire for failing to stop Big Coal from blowing up mountaintops in Appalachia, is ready to do what it takes to protect the public from coal ash. "I don't want to say that this is a litmus test for the EPA," says Evans, the Earthjustice attorney. "But in some ways it is. Regulating solid waste is something the EPA is very good at. The question is, do they have the political will to do the right thing?"



A photograph of a person lying on their back in a field of tall, dry grass. They are wearing a bright red jumpsuit and black boots. Their right hand is resting on their right thigh, holding a lit cigarette. The person's head is not visible, as the text of the article obscures it.

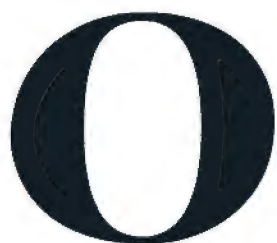
# JIMI'S LAST RIDE

Epic plans, earthly troubles  
and sweet music: The guitar  
god's frenetic final months  
and lost recordings

**BY DAVID FRICKE**

Hendrix on tour  
in Germany on  
September 6th,  
1970, 12 days  
before he died





ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 26th, 1970, Jimi Hendrix walked through the street-level door at 52 West 8th Street in New York's Greenwich Village into paradise.

Electric Lady Studios was the guitarist's own state-of-the-art recording facility, and he had personally supervised many of its psychedelic details, like the mural of an elfin woman at the console of a spaceship. Tonight was the official opening party. Guests including guitarist Johnny Winter, Yoko Ono and Fleetwood Mac drummer Mick Fleetwood enjoyed Japanese food in Studio A, where Hendrix usually had stacks of amplifiers.

Hendrix, however, avoided the crush. One of rock's most flamboyant showmen but a reserved, intensely shy man offstage, he was remote and despondent, spending much of the night sitting in a barber chair in a quiet corner of the reception area.

It would be his last night at Electric Lady. Hendrix died in London three weeks later. He was 27.

The studio that was supposed to be Hendrix's sanctuary was also a source of stress and frustration. He was scrambling for money despite hit-record sales to fund the construction at Electric Lady; changing band lineups; and battling his manager. But even at a low ebb, he was looking, as he put it in one song at the time, "Straight Ahead."

The Seattle-born guitarist had already revolutionized the blues roots, amplified fury and orchestral future of the electric guitar on three worldwide-hit albums – 1967's *Are You Experienced*, 1968's *Axis: Bold as Love* and the '68 double album *Electric Ladyland* – made with the Jimi Hendrix Experience: the British rhythm section of drummer Mitch Mitchell and bassist Noel Redding. There had also been constant touring and growing tensions, especially with Redding over money and the latter's own ambitions as a singer and songwriter. Even before Hendrix broke up the Experience in mid-'69, he was pushing his music beyond electric blues and acid rock, recording with jazz and soul players such as drummer Buddy Miles, bassist Dave Holland and future Mahavishnu Orchestra guitarist John McLaughlin.

"My initial success was a step in the right direction," Hendrix said in a June 1969 interview, as Electric Lady's construction was getting under way, "but it

was only a step, just a change. Now I plan to get into other things. A couple of years ago, all I wanted was to be heard. 'Let me in' was the thing. Now I'm trying to figure out the wisest way to be heard."

Located under a movie theater in a space that was most recently Generation, a rock club, with a striking brick facade that stuck out over the pavement like a pregnant woman's belly, Electric Lady was conceived by Hendrix, with his manager, Michael Jeffrey, and his stalwart recording engineer, Eddie Kramer, in early 1969. Design and construction took more than a year. The final cost was about \$1 million.

It was a historic enterprise. Electric Lady was the first major commercial studio in New York created specially for and owned by a Sixties rock star. In comparison, the Beatles and Bob Dylan mostly recorded in facilities owned by their record labels, according to strict corporate rules. For years, at Abbey Road in London,

**"THIS ERA OF MUSIC HAS COME TO AN END," SAID HENDRIX. "SOMETHING NEW HAS TO COME, AND I WILL BE THERE."**

the Beatles worked with studio engineers who were required to dress in white lab coats.

For Hendrix, Electric Lady was also a refuge from the whirlwind. He was exhausted by his celebrity – "I don't want to be a clown anymore, I don't want to be a rock & roll star," he complained to *ROLLING STONE* in 1969 – and frustrated with the pressure from Jeffrey to stay on the road making the fast, big money. Hendrix spent much of 1968 as well as the spring of '69 touring North America.

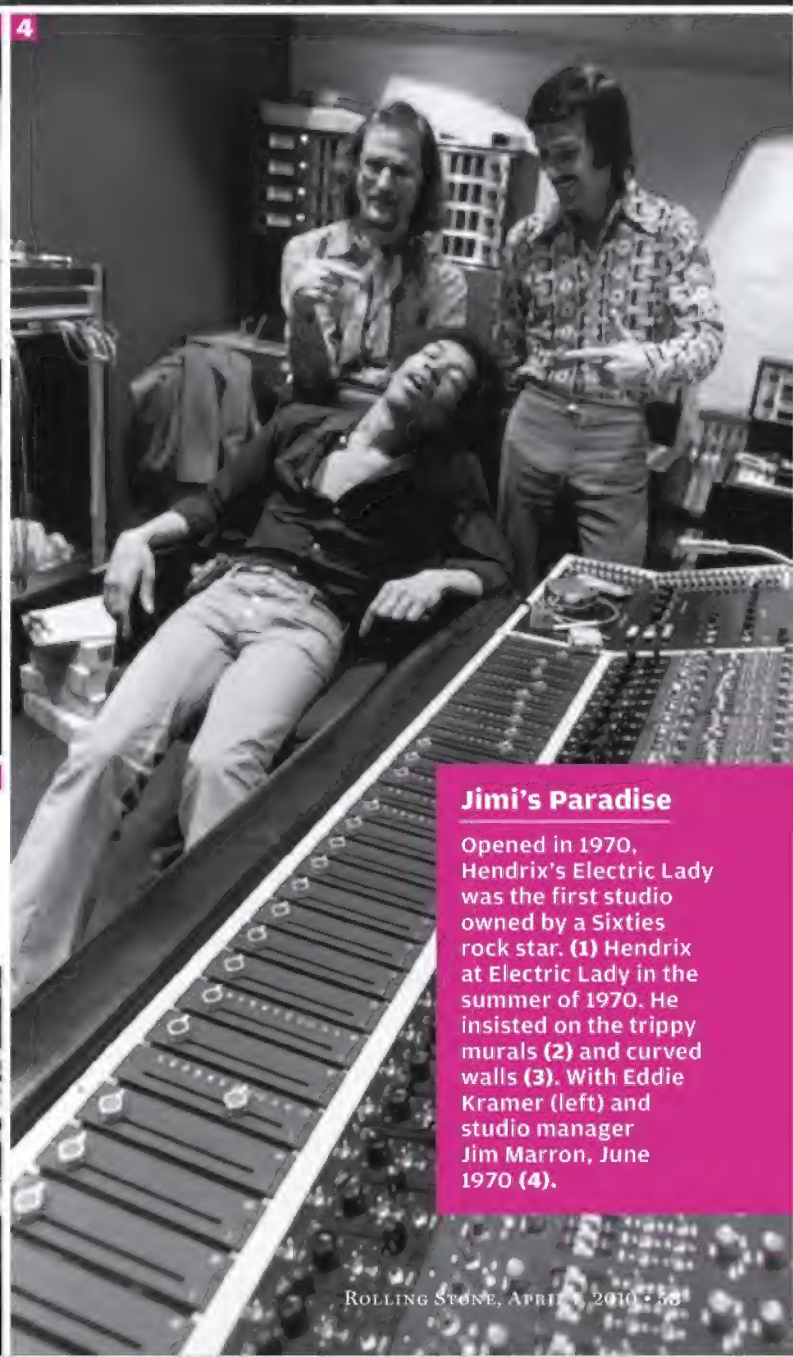
At Electric Lady, Hendrix – who had been touring nonstop since the mid-Sixties, when he was a sideman for R&B stars like Little Richard and the Isley Brothers – finally had a place of his own, where he could live with his music without interference. "That was the dream," says veteran studio architect John Storyk, who was only 22 when Hendrix commissioned him to design Electric Lady. "As an artist, this became your home."

Hendrix held his first formal recording session in Studio A on June 15th, 1970, two months before the opening party. The site was in disarray; a second studio was still being built at the end of the hall. But Hendrix got right to work with his current trio: Mitchell and bassist Billy Cox, a trusted old friend from Hendrix's early-Sixties spell in the Army. They played a new instrumental, "All God's Children." Then Hendrix cut guitar overdubs for the turbulent rocker "Ezy Ryder" and jammed with a studio guest, Traffic's Steve Winwood, on one of Hendrix's favorite recent originals, "Valleys of Neptune." That number, in a different incarnation, is now the centerpiece of an album of previously unreleased Hendrix studio recordings, also called *Valleys of Neptune*.

For the next several weeks, Hendrix concentrated on finishing the year's worth of songs and endless takes he had accumulated for his long-overdue fourth studio album. "We had two closets full of Jimi Hendrix tapes, floor to ceiling, with all of the jams and stuff we had done," says Kramer, who had been Hendrix's steady engineer since *Are You Experienced*. "He would say, 'Pull that take over there.' Or 'Go to this section, yeah, stop. That's what we need.'" Sessions at Electric Lady started at about 8 p.m. and ran long into the next day. Hendrix was so keen to spend every waking minute at Electric Lady that he would show up ahead of schedule.

"That was a huge change I saw in him," Kramer notes. "In the past, we would call for sessions at the Record Plant for seven, and he wouldn't come until midnight, because he was jamming somewhere. At Electric Lady, we'd call a session for seven, and he was often there early. And if he saw a lady standing in the control room, he would get her a chair. The guy was so polite – and proud of the place."

Senior writer DAVID FRICKE profiled Eric Clapton and Jeff Beck in *RS* 1099.



### Jimi's Paradise

Opened in 1970, Hendrix's Electric Lady was the first studio owned by a Sixties rock star. (1) Hendrix at Electric Lady in the summer of 1970. He insisted on the trippy murals (2) and curved walls (3). With Eddie Kramer (left) and studio manager Jim Marron, June 1970 (4).

**BLUES POWER**  
With Mick  
Jagger  
backstage at a  
Stones concert  
at Madison  
Square Garden  
in 1969



But Hendrix did not enjoy himself at the opening party. Publicist Jane Friedman, whose company represented the guitarist in America, found him at one point sitting alone on the staircase. "I thought, 'Is he exhausted?'" she says. "I walked up to him and said, 'What's the matter?' He admitted he wasn't very happy." Hendrix had good reasons. He was then in a volatile relationship with one of his girlfriends, Devon Wilson – the inspiration for the bloodthirsty vamp in the galloping rocker "Dolly Dagger." And Hendrix had to stop work at Electric Lady because Jeffrey had booked another tour; Hendrix was flying to London the next day. The last straw was a food fight started by some guests in his pristine new studio. He split in disgust.

But Hendrix talked with another guest before he left: Patti Smith, then a 23-year-old unknown singer-poet managed by Friedman. Smith was sitting on the stairs, where Hendrix joined her. "I was too nervous to go into the party," she recalls. "He said, 'What are you doing? Not going in?' We talked about the studio. He just loved it. He was so excited by it. Listening to him talk was beautiful in every way."

Hendrix never saw Electric Lady again. After playing concerts in Britain, Scandinavia and Germany, including an epic, intermittently brilliant show for 600,000

people on the Isle of Wight, Hendrix – unhappy with the shows and concerned for Cox, who was ill – canceled the remaining dates. He died in London, in his sleep, on September 18th. The official cause of death was "inhalation of vomit due to barbiturate intoxication." Hendrix was an avid fan of LSD and pot and had used heroin (but never succumbed to full-blown addiction). This time, he took an overpowering dose of a sedative, Vesperax.

**"WITH THE MUSIC WE WILL PAINT PICTURES OF EARTH AND SPACE, SO THAT THE LISTENER CAN BE TAKEN SOMEWHERE."**

Forty years later, Electric Lady is still open for business, at the same location. The outdoor-belly facade is gone; the "electric lady" mural, painted by Lance Jost, is now on the curved wall of Studio A. Led Zeppelin, Stevie Wonder and David Bowie worked on major records there in the Seventies. More recent clients include the Black Crowes and Ryan Adams.

And Smith has gone back often to record; she made her 1975 debut LP, *Horses*, there. "Every time I go in, I can look at the stair we sat on," she says. "That's why I love to record there. It has his spirit."

**I**N ONE OF HIS FINAL INTERVIEWS, a couple of days before his Isle of Wight appearance, Hendrix told Britain's *Melody Maker* that he had nothing but the future on his mind. "I want a big band," he declared. "I don't mean three harps and 14 violins. I want a big band full of competent musicians that I can conduct and write for. And with the music we will paint pictures of Earth and space, so that the listener can be taken somewhere."

Hendrix also said he'd been "thinking that this era of music – sparked off by the Beatles – had come to an end. Something new has got to come, and Jimi Hendrix will be there."

He didn't make it. But Hendrix left behind a wealth of music that continues to astonish; pivotal and exciting, previously unheard recordings are still being unearthed four decades later. Hendrix's melodic, often elegant wrangling of feedback and distortion and his spiritual ambitions as a composer and producer – to make a music for new-world travel, fusing the sex and lament of electric blues with the spatial theater of the latest recording technology – were genuinely psychedelic yet remain vividly modern. “He was bigger than LSD,” the Who's guitarist Pete Townshend wrote about Hendrix in this magazine in 2003. “What he played was fucking loud but also incredibly lyrical and expert. He managed to build this bridge between true blues guitar . . . and modern sounds” – what Townshend described as “the wall of screaming guitar sound that U2 popularized.”

Hendrix's three '67-'68 albums all went Top Five in America – *Electric Ladyland* was Number One – and he still sells records like a living superstar. Since his death, there have been more than 50 official posthumous albums, including rarities collections, concert releases and greatest-hits sets. This year, Experience Hendrix – the company representing Hendrix's estate, founded in 1995 by his late father, Al, and run by Jimi's stepsister Janie – started a new worldwide licensing agreement with Sony Music. The first fruits of a decade-long plan of releases (see accompanying story) are *Valleys of Neptune* and deluxe reissues, with DVDs, of Hendrix's three original studio albums and *First Rays of the New Rising Sun*, the 1997 collection of songs he intended for the unfinished fourth.

The record business has changed dramatically since Experience Hendrix won full control of the guitarist's master recordings, after years of litigation. “Downloading didn't exist, CDs were still coming up,” says Janie. “But this is still Jimi's music. He only made four albums but created much more music. Perhaps it wasn't quite ready to release. But we have it.”

And Hendrix was in total charge of that music when he made it. *Valleys of Neptune* does not have anything from his months at Electric Lady. Instead, the 12 tracks run the gamut from the acid-garage *Axix* outtake “Mr. Bad Luck” to the dynamic title track – a composite of Hendrix's vocal from a '69 session and a feral instrumental track from May 1970 – and a surging guitar-choir instrumental, “Lullaby for the Summer,” which Hendrix ultimately reworked into “Ezy Ryder.”

But the rich pickings reflect the same consuming drive to innovate and succeed that dominated the last year of his life. From August 1969 until September 1970, Hendrix played some of the most important and memorable shows of his career: the closing set at Woodstock, with his classic immolation of “The Star-

# UNHEARD HENDRIX

**Exciting finds in the Jimi vaults: Lost concerts, epic jams, documentary footage**

**J**IMI HENDRIX DIED WITHOUT a will, causing years of legal turmoil over management of his estate. Now, four decades after his death, much of the rare, exciting music still sitting in the vaults is finally seeing an official release.

Among the tracks unearthed: the Band of Gypsies song “Burning Desire,” a whirlwind nine minutes that starts with Hendrix's sassy, clucking guitar over a rolling bass line, then swerves into a hard-funk charge. Hendrix, Billy Cox and Buddy Miles bolt into punklike double time and drop down to a churning blues, with Hendrix massaging his chords with glistening tremolo-bar flourishes.



**MIDNIGHT LIGHTNING** Hendrix at London's Royal Albert Hall in 1969

“Burning Desire,” recorded at the Record Plant in New York on January 16th, 1970, has never been issued. That also goes for a killer instrumental take of “Castles Made of Sand,” a 1967 run-through with just Hendrix and Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell, and an alternate master of the *Are You Experienced* ballad “May This Be Love,” with different vocals and lead guitar, that Hendrix nearly picked for the final album.

All three tracks will finally be released in the next year by Experience Hendrix, through its new deal with

Sony Music, in a multidisc anthology of rare and unheard music from the guitarist's early sideman recordings to some of his very last sessions.

Like the mid-Nineties Beatles *Anthology* CDs, the Hendrix set “will feature unreleased or commercially unavailable music, pulling it together in a cohesive way,” says Hendrix biographer John McDermott, who is the director of catalog development for Experience Hendrix. “You get to hear ‘My Diary’ [a 1964 single made with Rosa Lee Brooks] to ‘Black Gold’ and some of the demos Jimi was working on before his death.” Experience Hendrix is also preparing a “definitive documentary,” directed by Bob Smeaton, who did the Beatles' *Anthology* video history.

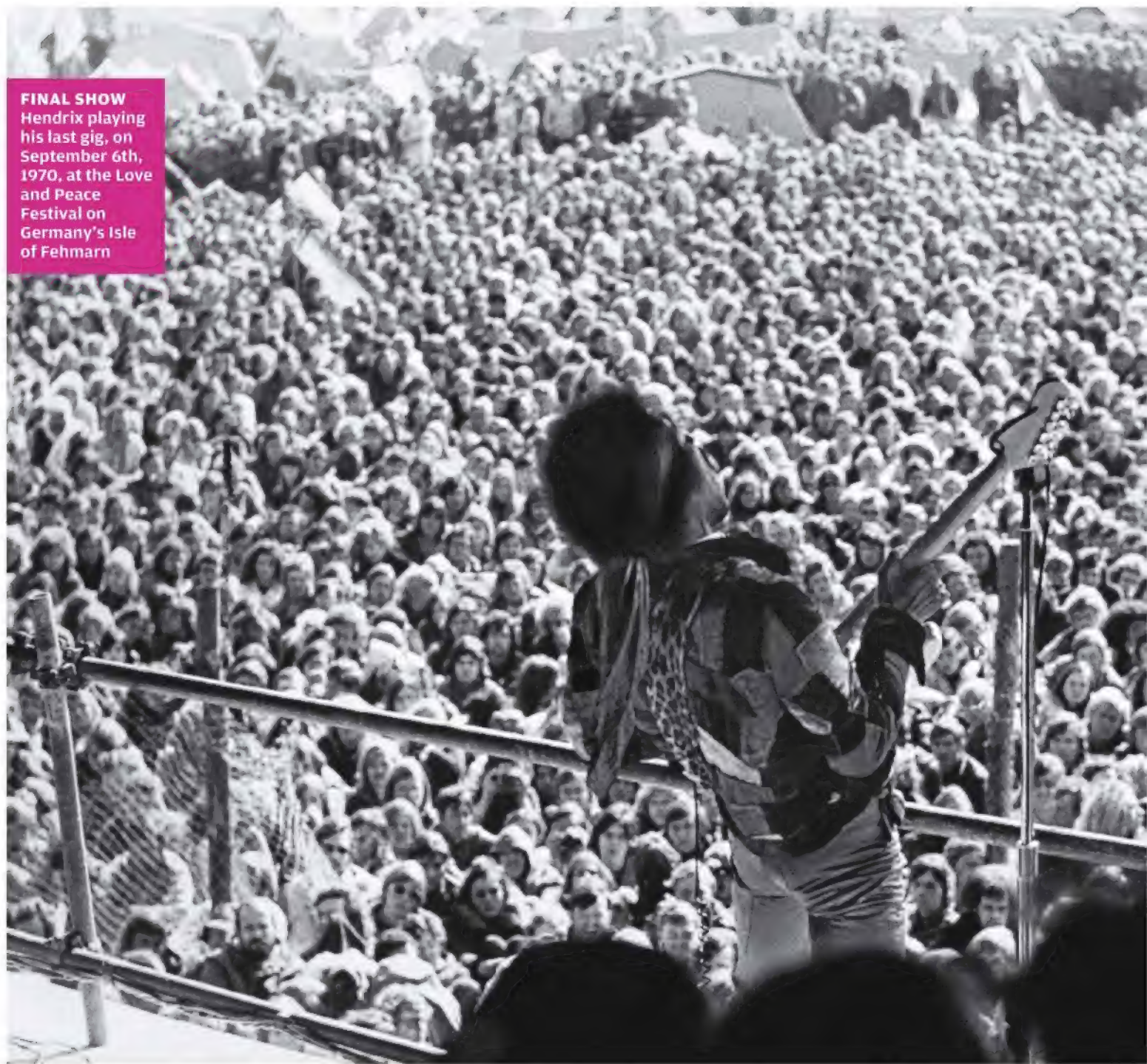
Unlike many artists at the time, Hendrix always owned his song publishing and master recordings. “The music informs the decisions,” says McDermott of the rarities and live sets he co-produces with Eddie Kramer and Janie Hendrix. “We ask, ‘What's there? Is it up to the quality people expect?’ Because Jimi was such an improvisational guy, a live recording from Winterland is different from Woodstock and Isle of Wight. They all have value.”

Future releases in the works include the February 1969 shows filmed and recorded at London's Royal Albert Hall, and a May 1968 set at the Miami Pop Festival. “I found the Miami material by going through all of these old correspondences,” says McDermott. “I found the widow of the guy who had all the stuff. And it's brilliant.” He would also like to do a “proper presentation” of the Experience's February 1968 stand at Winterland in San Francisco.

There are tapes that still elude McDermott, recordings “presented to Warner Bros. after Jimi's death but that they didn't know what to do with.” He cites a video recording of a June 5th, 1970, show in Dallas. “Jimi was always inspired when he played in Texas. The video was offered to Warner Bros., but they passed. It's out there somewhere, people.” And if you know where, “please call Experience Hendrix.”

D.F.

**FINAL SHOW**  
Hendrix playing  
his last gig, on  
September 6th,  
1970, at the Love  
and Peace  
Festival on  
Germany's Isle  
of Fehmarn



Spangled Banner"; the New Year's concerts at the Fillmore East with Cox and drummer Buddy Miles as Band of Gypsies; 1970 gigs with Cox and Mitchell at Berkeley and the Atlanta International Pop Festival. And there would be more than 70 documented recording sessions, two dozen of them at Electric Lady alone.

"Multitasking was a way of life for him," says Cox. "It wasn't a strain. He had a lot of things going on. But he knew where he wanted to go, how he wanted to get there." Cox remembers getting up one morning at the house in upstate New York where he was rehearsing with Hendrix for Woodstock: "We had amps set out on the patio. I was fiddling around, tuning up, and played 'Big Ben' [the famous melody of the chimes at the Houses of Parliament] right below

Jimi's window. He stuck his head out – 'Keep playing that, don't stop!' He came down in his drawers, picked up his guitar and played this answering riff." Hendrix soon developed that into the opening sequence of "Dolly Dagger."

Hendrix joked about his work ethic to TV talk-show host Dick Cavett. "Do you consider yourself a disciplined guy?" Cavett asked in a July 1969 interview. "Do you get up every day and work?"

"I try to get up every day," Hendrix cracked. But he also spoke plainly of his determination. "I don't live on compliments. Matter of fact, it has a way of distracting me. A whole lotta musicians out there – they hear these compliments, and they think, 'Wow, it must have been really great.' So they get fat and satisfied and

lost, and they forget about the actual talent that they have, and they start living in another world."

Tommy Erdelyi saw Hendrix's resolve in close-up. Erdelyi is better known as Tommy Ramone; he co-founded the Ramones in 1974 and was their original drummer. But in late 1969 and early 1970, he was an assistant engineer at the Record Plant in New York and worked on Hendrix's sessions there with Band of Gypsies. Songs recorded at those dates included early versions of the 1970 single "Izabella" and the guitar-firefight epic "Machine Gun."

"He wasn't verbal, but he didn't have any trouble explaining what he wanted," Erdelyi says of Hendrix. "He would do take after take, then want the gear



"It also made me realize why he was a perfectionist," Erdelyi continues. "To me, Jimi Hendrix was a rock god. He didn't think of himself that way. He was competing with other musicians. He came to those sessions in a very serious way, to make the best records he possibly could."

**I**T WAS DESTINY – WE JAMMED, and it sounded good," says Cox, reflecting on the first time he played with Hendrix, in November 1961, in a serviceman's club on the Army base in Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Hendrix was a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division. "But Jimi would come right over after he had formation with his company," says Cox. "We would rehearse all day long, every day, working on patterns and riffs." Years later, when Cox first heard Hendrix's records with the Experience, he recognized some of those licks, which ended up in "Foxey Lady" and "Purple Haze." Cox, 68, is performing his friend's songs through March, along with guitarists such as Joe Satriani, Jonny Lang and Vernon Reid, on the 2010 Experience Hendrix tribute tour.

Hendrix and Cox had a similar routine in 1970, before sessions at Electric Lady. "Jimi would come to my apartment," Cox says. "We'd turn on a small amp and work on music. I'd add something. He'd add something. We'd sit and laugh and have some strawberry upside-down cake, watch television. Then we'd go back to the song.

"We didn't fish, we didn't hunt, we didn't play tennis or golf," Cox goes on. "Music

who had his first meeting with Hendrix, Kramer and Jeffrey about the project in January 1969. Storyk soon got a call telling him the club was scrapped. Hendrix wanted a "full-on recording studio."

Storyk describes Hendrix as "polite, extremely quiet and very attentive. He was very organized as to how he wanted the place to look and feel. He didn't want any straight lines. He wanted curves. He wanted it to feel like a living room. It was for his comfort." During construction, Storyk saw little of Hendrix. But the guitarist stopped by at night, after the workers had gone home, to see how things were going.

"I remember one visit," Storyk says. "We had all the doors installed" – custom-soundproofed doors with small square windows. "Jimi said, 'Can we make these windows round?' Fifteen expensive doors came off, and four weeks later, there were new ones with round windows. We changed them, because that's what he wanted." But the remarkable front of Electric Lady was Storyk's idea, inspired by Kiesler's long, rounded design for the Shrine of the Book, the Jerusalem museum that houses the Dead Sea Scrolls. "Jimi never even saw the drawings. It just went up."

Building delays and unexpected problems – at one point the site was flooded by water from an underground river – forced Hendrix to take out a \$300,000 loan from his label, Warner Bros. Hendrix also did long-weekend tours to help pay the mounting construction bills. At the same time, he was recording at other New York studios, spending more money and getting little done. "He would call me up in a panic

## **"JIMI DIDN'T SEE HIMSELF AS A ROCK GOD," SAYS RAMONE. "HE ONCE ASKED IF HE WAS BETTER THAN LESLIE WEST."**

moved around if he wasn't getting the right sound." Erdelyi recalls performances of songs like "Machine Gun" in which Hendrix's guitar, blowing at top volume through three stacks of Marshall speaker cabinets, shook the control-room window. "He could get incredible sustain, this deep tone, almost like a cello. It was beautiful stuff."

But Hendrix also "seemed insecure," Erdelyi adds. He was with Hendrix at the Record Plant one day while guitarist Leslie West recorded with his band Mountain in another room. "Jimi asked me, 'Do you think Leslie West is better than me?' I thought he was kidding." Erdelyi pauses, still shocked by the question. "Then I realized that he was serious.

was the priority. If you love something greater than you love yourself, it overcomes everything." Asked if Hendrix loved music so much that he left no time for rest or peace – Cox quotes Hendrix's lyrics in "Manic Depression," from *Are You Experienced*. "Music, sweet music, I wish I could caress, caress."

Music, Cox says, "was his peace."

Hendrix originally envisioned the basement space on 8th Street – the site of the famous Film Guild Cinema, built in 1929 and designed by the avant-garde architect Frederick Kiesler – as a different kind of playground. "He jammed at the club there, Generation, a lot," says Kramer. "He wanted a nightclub, a place to hang and jam."

"In the club would be a booth where he could record things live," says John Storyk,

in the middle of the night," says Kramer, who was director of engineering at Electric Lady and busy taking care of its technical needs. "He'd say, 'Man, can you come down to the Record Plant? It's not happening.' I would jump in a cab and get him situated." Days later, Kramer would get a similar call from the Hit Factory.

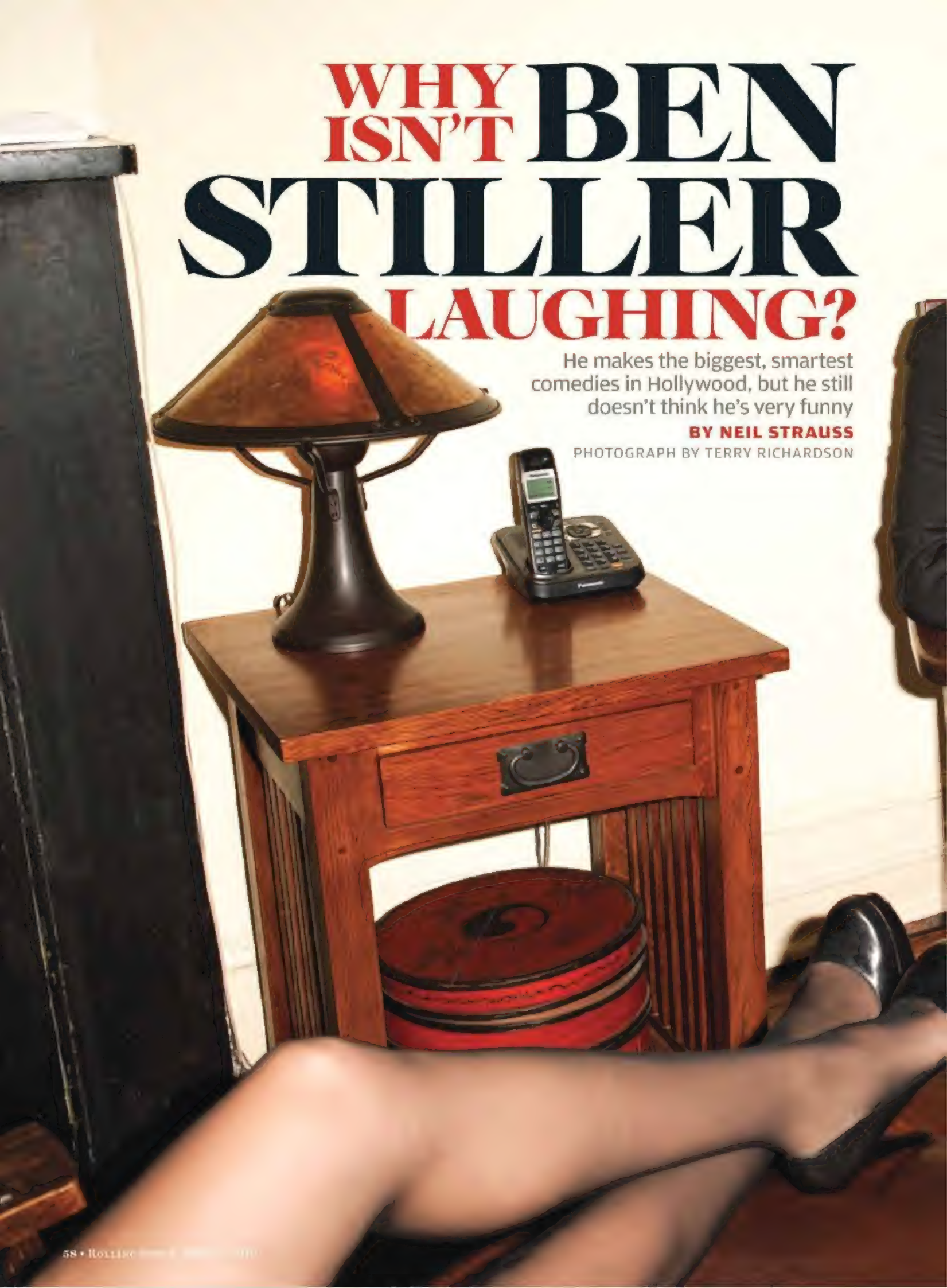
Somehow, in the middle of that tumult, in March 1970, Hendrix made a quick trip to London, where he played on sessions for two American friends in town: Stephen Stills and Love's Arthur Lee. "He was in a swirl," says Stills, who was living in England at the time and making his first solo album, *Stephen Stills*. "But that day in London we had was very peaceful." At Island Studios, Hendrix played a fluid, unusually tempered solo on [Cont. on 86]

# WHY **BEN** ISN'T **STILLER** **LAUGHING?**

He makes the biggest, smartest comedies in Hollywood, but he still doesn't think he's very funny

**BY NEIL STRAUSS**

PHOTOGRAPH BY TERRY RICHARDSON





**I**T IS NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO HAVE A DISCUSSION about the past 20 years of comedy filmmaking without mentioning Ben Stiller. As far back as his first shorts parodying Tom Cruise and LL Cool J and his influential sketch series, *The Ben Stiller Show*, he built a reputation for spotting comedy talent early, and worked with everyone from Judd Apatow to David Cross, Andy Dick, Janeane Garofalo, Jack Black and Owen Wilson. His directorial debut, *Reality Bites*, captured the zeitgeist of the slacker alt-rock generation at its peak. In 2004 alone, he starred in six comedies. Over the course of his career, he has laid claim to some of the most oft-referenced comedy scenes of his era, from the hair gel in *There's Something About Mary* to the Blue Steel of *Zoolander*, while crossing the funnyman chasm to also become a bona fide lead in everything from romances to dramas to family movies.

Born into a showbiz family (his parents are the comedy team of Anne Meara and Jerry Stiller), he appears to have one of the most charmed lives in entertainment – until you meet him. In person, there's nothing very funny about Stiller. Wandering through the Man Ray exhibit at the International Center of Photography in Manhattan, he is slumped in a black overcoat, his hair unkempt and a wiry gray goatee spotting his face. There's a dark weight that seems to burden him, whether due to a hectic schedule or the curse of thinking too much. He describes himself as "socially uncomfortable" by nature, and friends say that they find him quiet and guarded when out of his comfort zone on set.

"L.A. is depressing," he says matter-of-factly as he orders a Caesar salad at the museum cafe. "I was in Century City at night once, and it was such a ghost town, it made me want to slit my wrists."

It's almost as though Stiller, 44, is still in character for his latest movie, *Greenberg*, a Noah Baumbach-directed character study of a neurotic, unemployed 40-year-old still harboring the pipe dream that he can re-form his indie-rock band and win back his high school sweetheart. A romantic comedy so black that it's a drama, *Greenberg* is perhaps the first film since Stiller played a junkie TV writer in 1998's *Permanent Midnight* where he succeeds in making the audience forget that he is actually Ben Stiller. Those who have worked with him describe him as a driven perfectionist. But as he sits down at the cafe, he explains that, thanks in part to his family (wife and occasional co-star Christine Taylor and their children, Ella, seven, and Quinlin, four), he's turned a corner and is learning to slow down and let go.

*Do you see "Greenberg" as a bookend to "Reality Bites," where 15 years later it's not so cool to still be a slacker, and no one gets your cultural references anymore?*

People have said that. I never thought that when we were doing it, except maybe in the party scene at the end. Instead of using extras, Noah had the girls who were in the movie invite their friends. We were totally intimidated by these kids who were supercool and superhip. I was not like that at 20. So it was three days where Noah and I, in between shots, would say to each other, "This is like the movie right now. We're *Greenberg*."

*In what way?*

I wasn't so confident. I didn't have my shit together. There's an air about them that is like, "Wow, they really seem to fucking own the place." And I guess they do, because they're young and have it all ahead of them. So it was like, "How does my own experience of being older and my own regrets about things that haven't come together in my life the way I wanted them to inform that point of view of *Greenberg*?"

*So what kind of regrets do you have?*

There are movies that I was supposed to direct that didn't happen that I still think about all the time. "If I'd done that movie, what direction would my career have gone in?" I don't blame myself, though maybe I

**"I'VE NEVER BEEN THE GUY WHO GETS LAUGHS AT A PARTY. THAT HASN'T BEEN MY MODUS OPERANDI."**

could go back and look at the ways I sabotaged it at the time. And I've been in relationships where I've screwed things up, where somebody was too there for me – too available – and it scared me.

*And you took them for granted?*

Yeah, and I made mistakes in the relationship that ended it. With that movie I didn't direct, it came at a time when I was in a relationship that I'd self-sabotaged and was trying to get back into. At that moment, I was more focused on the relationship than doing the movie. So maybe I didn't fight as hard as I should have.

*You often say you don't think you're funny in person. But do you think you're funny onscreen?*

Oh! Good question. Occasionally. I really don't make a practice of watching stuff that I've done, because it's just too strange and narcissistic, and it doesn't feel right. But when you're working on something that you're in and you're directing it, you obviously have to watch yourself a lot. So I'll see things, and more often than not I'm disappointed.

*What about after the process?*

Every once in a while you'll be flipping through the channels, and you'll see something, and if it's more than five years old, then it becomes sort of an oddity where you go, "Wow, that actually happened? What were we thinking back then?"

*You're often hiding under a wig or mustache or sunglasses in your comedies. Even in "If Lucy Fell," you're basically the only actor in a crazy wig.*

Yes. I remember I was going through a breakup, and I wanted to just fill time as much as possible. So they asked, "Oh, do you want to get dreadlocks?" And I thought, "That will take up eight hours of my life." So that was the motivation.

*What do you think the difference is between parody and satire?*

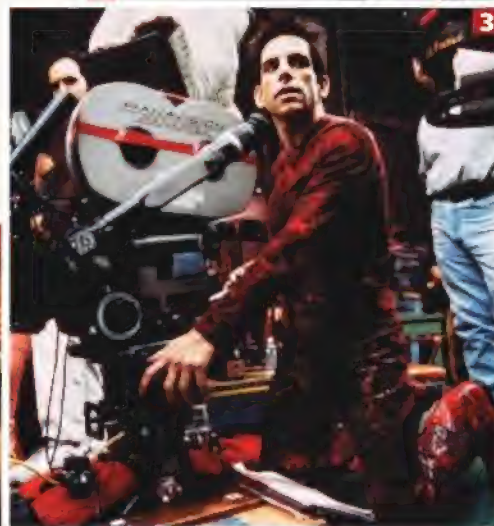
Parody, for me, is a reductive term, and it can be simplistic. Satire is commenting in some way, and parody is just making fun of things. On *The Ben Stiller Show* we did a lot of parodies. Something like *Tropic Thunder* is a bit more satirical. You do parody more when you're starting out, because you're influenced by the things you're attracted to and want to learn more about. But then hopefully you develop past that.

*Judging by the parodies from "The Ben Stiller Show," you were attracted to heroic characters like Bono, Tom Cruise and Bruce Springsteen.*

Yes, yes. I love those guys.

*Growing up, did you want to be more of an action hero than a comedian?*

If anything, I wanted to be like an Al Pacino/Robert De Niro guy, because I loved those movies growing up. But that just wasn't in the cards. Then when I was 19, I started watching SCTV. That really affected me, and so did watching Albert Brooks movies. So I started exploring



## King of Comedy

(1) Ben at age 12 with his dad, Jerry Stiller, in 1978. (2) The cast of *The Ben Stiller Show* (clockwise from left): Janeane Garofalo, Bob Odenkirk, Stiller and Andy Dick, in 1992. (3) Directing *Zoolander*, in 2001. (4) Starring in the neurotic character study *Greenberg*.

that, and it was very derivative for a long time, which is part of the process of figuring out what your voice is.

*What was the turning point when your work went from parody to satire?*

I just got tired of waiting for somebody to do something that I could then work off of. *Reality Bites* gave me a different experience. After that, parody was not something I wanted to do. A lot of times, movies and TV shows are influenced by genres. *Zoolander* was going off of a *Manchurian Candidate* template. We wanted to take a genre plot that we could hang the comedy on.

*I heard that you're doing a sequel to "Zoolander."*

*Zoolander*, to me, is a unique sort of thing, because when it came out, it didn't really have any box office, but it's taken on this life of its own since.

*It doesn't feel like it's too pure to touch and possibly ruin its legacy?*

I do feel the challenge of having to live up to the original. It's been 10 years, and it would be crazy to revisit it and think

about what would have happened to the characters in that time. Also, the first one was sort of a stressful shoot, because the studio didn't really get the movie.

*They kept second-guessing you?*

Yeah, they all were like, "What are you doing?" I was directing and acting, and I walked away from it thinking I never wanted to do something like that again.

*Didn't that happen to you after "The Cable Guy" wasn't a huge hit?*

I remember I got a new agent, and the first thing my agent said to me was, "OK, you just have to do nothing for, like, six months." They put me in movie jail.

*Did being criticized for that movie turn you off from directing for a while?*

I don't think that I consciously shied away from directing after *The Cable Guy*. It just happened. I'd just done *Flirting With Disaster* around that time, too, then *There's Something About Mary* came out as a result of that, and I had these opportunities as an actor that I hadn't

had before. Until then, I thought I was a director.

But I stopped reading pretty much everything written about me around the time of *Zoolander*. I had no idea that people could write things about you where they didn't call you up and tell you. I didn't think that anybody would even care or that I was somebody worth reading about.

*People say you're one of the hardest-working people they know, that work is an addiction for you.*

The first part of getting rid of an addiction is acknowledging that you have it, and I acknowledge that I enjoy working. Anyone that's kicked heroin will tell you they enjoyed it until they realized it was screwing up their life. I haven't hit bottom yet, but I've gotten to a place where I realized it's out of balance, and I've adjusted. Last summer, I took five months off after *Greenberg* and went away with my family, and it was great. Nobody ever talks about that. The area of my life that I have no question about is my commitment to my family. And that's the implication when people ask, "Oh, why do you work so much?"

*They didn't say it as a judgment. But maybe your perspective comes from being raised by parents who were entertainers and not around a lot.*

It's all valid stuff. I grew up with parents who needed to work to take care of their family – and also enjoyed working too. They were great parents and also weren't perfect parents. I'm all of those things too. I don't think you can reduce it down.

*One of the writers on "The Ben Stiller Show" said there was a joke among the writers that if they wanted to make sure their sketch would be used, they included a scene with you taking off your shirt. Have you ever heard that?*

Oh, my God. No. Jesus Christ! I have no response to that, but they were probably right [laughs]. That's great.

*Someone else you worked with described you as competitive and afraid of failure.*

I've obviously failed at that. I don't know if fear of failure is necessarily a bad thing. On the other hand, the ultimate fear of failure would be paralysis and not doing anything. If that's there, which it definitely is, I don't want that to be what stops me from trying something.

*"Micromanager" was another word that came up a lot.*

That's one of the hard things. I'm working on it. I've attempted to micromanage many things. Producing is hard that way, because once you hire somebody to direct the movie, you have to have confidence in them to do that job. And I feel like I'm in a place where I know that's not bringing me happiness. Maybe it's because I'm getting older and I'm too tired to do it all. [Cont. on 88]

Contributing editor NEIL STRAUSS interviewed Ringo Starr in RS 1097.



# MARIJUANA

**I**F YOU SPEND ENOUGH TIME up in the Emerald Triangle – an area in Northern California comprising the adjoining counties of Mendocino, Humboldt and Trinity – you might notice a few things. There's the crab fisherman selling you fresh crabs from his boat with a lit joint hanging from his mouth. There's the jingle on the local radio station with the chorus "Going to jail sucks!" (It's an ad for a bail-bond agency, which runs right after an ad for a hydroponic-growing store.) If you're in the Triangle in October, at the start of the harvest season, you might notice people standing by the side of the road with cardboard signs that read **LOOKING FOR WORK**, or signs simply depicting a hand-drawn pair of scissors. You might notice that locals call hundred-dollar bills "Humboldt twenties" and

From California to downtown Detroit, there's a green revolution sweeping across the nation – and it's changing the weed business forever

*By* MARK BINELLI

complain about how expensive everything is, or their use of the verb formation "getting flown," meaning one's property has been buzzed by a DEA helicopter (e.g., "We got flown a bunch of times this summer, so we knew a bust was coming"). At some point, your cellphone will probably stop working, and you might notice how the two-lane road darkens as it slices into a canyon of redwoods, and how your car shrinks, too, pattering at the foot of the giant, primeval forest, and

how that Bigfoot-themed souvenir shop several miles back is starting to seem like a beacon of civilization. And if you keep going, eventually, somewhere deep in the mountains, you will arrive at Vic Tobias' place.

Tobias is a marijuana grower, and he is having a very long day. His waterlines froze, or broke, he's not sure which, but that has meant no running water at his house for the past couple of



# AMERICA

days. This coincided, as luck would have it, with out-of-town visitors – buyers looking to be introduced to other local growers with weight to unload. Tobias has been scrambling to set up the meets, a delicate process in a part of the country where new faces are not generally greeted with small-town hospitality, where it's considered sloppy form (as one grower tells me) to give your real name to the pizza-delivery guy. Most urgently, though, Tobias has 45 marijuana plants in full bloom that need to be harvested by tomorrow morning if he wants to move his product on schedule. It's close to midnight, and he's been up since dawn.

In years past, work in this part of the country meant either logging or fishing, though with the depletion of natural resources, neither industry has been much of a going concern for years. Countercultural types began drifting up here from the Bay Area in the late Sixties, drawn not only by the spectacular landscape but by its remoteness. Which, of course, lent itself to the creation of a new local source of income: growing pot. In Tobias' succinct but essentially accurate historical tell-

ing, "Hippies went to India, smuggled out seeds up their asses and came here." It was really more often Afghanistan, but the point is the same. From an origin story as humble as that of Hollywood (Cecil B. DeMille filming his first feature in a horse barn) or Silicon Valley (Steve Jobs inventing the personal computer in his garage), a massive, quintessentially Californian industry was born.

Thanks to the ambiguous wording of Proposition 215, the 1996 ballot initiative that allows for the possession and cultivation (but not the distribution or sale) of medical marijuana in California, the weed business has expanded exponentially over the past decade. Most of the medical pot in California is sold through dispensaries: Some, in cities like Oakland, are massive places that see hundreds, even thousands, of patients every day, whereas in Los Angeles, storefront pot clubs – up to 1,000 of them by some estimates – have crept into mini-malls and commercial strips all across the city. This has so embarrassed the L.A. City Council that, in January, it passed an ordinance that could slash the number of shops to 70. All told,

the state's annual marijuana crop is estimated by some to be worth about \$14 billion, "dwarfing," in the words of a recent Associated Press story, "any other sector of the state's agricultural economy."

When California voters passed Prop 215, it seemed like typical behavior from the people who brought us Scientology and the career of Gary Busey. But now, as the economy has cratered and millions of Americans have found themselves forced to rethink their livelihoods, there's a growing feeling that the country can no longer afford its longstanding prohibition on marijuana – a sense, for the first time since the Seventies, that pot could soon be decriminalized in many states, or even made fully legal. Fourteen states have already approved medical marijuana, and 14 others have some form of marijuana legislation pending. And that doesn't include Massachusetts, which last year effectively decriminalized pot for recreational use, making possession of up to an ounce punishable by a \$100 ticket. On the national level, a Harvard economist has estimated that legalizing pot could save the government \$13 billion annually in prohibition costs (including cops and prisons) and raise \$7 billion in annual revenues if marijuana is taxed – a potent argument at a time when local municipalities are being forced to slash services and cut public-sector jobs. "In past years, people have interpreted legalization to mean liberalization – to mean condoning marijuana and letting it get out of control," notes Ethan Nadelmann, the founder of the Drug Policy Alliance Network, a nonprofit group devoted to ending the War on Drugs. "Now, more and more, people are interpreting it as taxation and regulation."

**T**HIS IS WHY I HAVE COME to the Emerald Triangle: to witness, firsthand, this singular, transformative moment in what's been, for so long, an underground culture, one that became both refuge and perfect fit for an oddball combination of righteous outlaws and straight-up hustlers, conscientious dropouts and scary guys with guns, all of whom are now having to adapt their unique skill sets to an ever-shifting legal and economic landscape. The bulk of the marijuana cultivation in California is done by growers like Vic Tobias and his neighbors; a recent study commissioned by Mendocino County had pot accounting for two-thirds of the local economy. Over the past year, in fact, the so-called "green rush" has created such a spike in the number of California pot growers that

there has been a negative impact – a glut of product. A recent article in the local *Anderson Valley Advertiser* observes that "supply is way up, prices way down, even if you can find a buyer, and a kind of desperation is rippling through the north hill country of Mendocino County as land and pot partners turn on each other and ruthless bands of home invaders cruise the mud dirt roads from Branscomb to Spy Rock to Alderpoint and points between."

I meet Tobias in the town closest to where he lives, which is still about a 45-minute drive for him, mostly down winding switchbacks. (Tobias' name has been changed to protect his identity.) "The thing you have to understand about up here is, everyone has a hand in the game – everyone," Tobias tells me as we stroll along a small-town main street. "See that

"THE THING YOU HAVE TO understand about up here is that everyone has a hand in the game," says one veteran Emerald Triangle marijuana grower. "Everyone."

kid over there?" He nods at a guy in his 20s in a baseball cap. "I guarantee he's growing. See that old lady who looks like a grandma?" He shifts his gaze to a sweet-looking gray-haired woman wearing a red Christmas sweater and cooing over a baby. "She's either a trimmer, or she's got people working her land for her. Up here, everyone's playing the law of averages: Ninety percent grow, one percent get busted."

Tobias has been growing weed since the mid-Nineties. He's in his late 30s, and today he's wearing muddy boots and a one-piece Carhartt coverall. At first, when he was living elsewhere on the West Coast, the pot growing was mostly for himself, a hobby, like home-brewing beer. He had a day job in an office, and he sold any weed he had left over on the side. But he discovered he had a green thumb, and he eventually moved to the Emerald Triangle to turn his hobby into a career.

He makes a decent but not extravagant living, one that places him somewhere in

the middle of the Triangle's growers – a bigger fish than the single mom who keeps a dozen or so plants in her backyard for some extra cash, but not in the same league as the major players, who often have ties to some form of organized crime and grow on a massive scale. (The biggest grow in recent memory was uncovered in 2007, when authorities in Humboldt County discovered an astonishing 135,000 plants in a remote section of forest owned by a private timber company. No arrests were made, but authorities said evidence on the scene pointed to Mexican drug cartels.)

A hardworking grower with more modest aims, though, can still run a four-season operation in the Triangle – one outdoor season in the summer and three hydroponic indoor seasons. Tobias' current indoor grow, about 200 plants, is in a long, windowless shed on his property that's divided into two rooms, one dark and one lit, alternating at 12-hour intervals. The 45 plants being harvested tonight should yield about five pounds of weed, which could fetch about \$20,000.

When we enter the grow from outside, the light is initially blinding. The room is packed tight with marijuana plants of varying heights. The tallest are chest high. Each plant has its own little black bucket, fed by snaking tubes that lead back to four plastic barrels filled with nutrient solution. Banks of grow lights, covered with silver shades, hang from the low ceiling like the canopied lamps over a pool table; four fans on the wall slowly move back and forth to cool the space. The walls are white and reflective, making it very bright and, with all the visible tubes and wires, like the set of a science-fiction movie. A lower-end grow tends to evoke a spaceship from an Ed Wood production. Tobias', though, is pure Kubrick – a 1960s vision of a gleaming, sterile future.

The plants are leafy and pungent, filling the room with a hothouse musk. The largest buds, fist-size footballs, form closest to the lights, making the stalks top-heavy; a gridded net of string prevents them from falling over. Tobias, slipping on a pair of sunglasses, slides beneath the netting and begins to cut the plants ready to be harvested, using a pair of clippers at the base and gingerly maneuvering the tops between the string. He wants to avoid touching the buds, if possible, particularly the hairlike trichomes (or "crystals"), which contain most of the plant's THC (tetrahydrocannabinol, the intoxicating substance in cannabis). "That's a sales tactic," he says. "Never touched by human hands." Now, one by one, he passes the stalks out to me. I balance as many as possible in a plastic tub, my hands and clothes quickly covered with sticky resin.

Contributing editor MARK BINELLI profiled Gregg Allman in RS 1082/1083.



**THE GREEN RUSH**

A grower in Northern California's  
Emerald Triangle, ground zero  
for the new marijuana industry



After filling tubs with two dozen plants, we carry them out to Tobias' truck. The night sky is clear and filled with stars. "There's Orion's Belt – see it?" he says, pointing out the constellation. Then we drive to another house on his property. This one looks long-abandoned. Old comforters cover the windows in lieu of curtains. Inside, there's a dim light in the kitchen, and the jam band Oysterhead are playing on an iPod hooked up to a boombox. Tobias' partner is toiling over a tabletop jack press, which he is using to make bricks of hash. Occasionally, he'll pause to take a hit of a joint (Mendocino Beauty crossed with Willie Nelson).

We carry the weed into another room, where several wires stretch from wall to wall, as high as clotheslines. Using clippers, we cut the plants into smaller branches, then hang them upside down from the wires, where they'll dry for a few days, at which point Tobias will hire a team of trimmers – who are paid \$225 a pound – to cultivate the valuable buds. Trimming is tedious, difficult work, but potentially lucrative: A good trimmer can do a couple of pounds in a day, though many take some of their payment in weed. To make their job easier, tonight we clip off as many of the large pot leaves as possible. This is called "big leafing." After 20 minutes or so, the red-tile floor is covered with a thick green-and-yellow carpet. When we're finished, Tobias grabs a broom and methodically cleans up the leaves, like a barber sweeping hair.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

Nick Tennant, 24, founded Med Grow Cannabis College in Southfield, Michigan, in 2009. A six-week, \$475 primer focuses on horticulture and the legal how-to's of the state's new medical-marijuana program.

Once the weed is ready for the market, Tobias will sell it to a middleman, who will, in turn, transport it to a larger city and find another buyer – either a medical-marijuana dispensary or a street dealer. Like many an ambitious small-businessman, Tobias is pretty much never not working. His career choice is one that's stressful, labor-intensive and, obviously, very high-risk. There are the typical farmer's worries of pulling off your crop, the constant pressure of getting busted and the danger, from the other direction, of robbery, home invasions, biker gangs. Since Tobias has been out here, he's had terrible years where he's lost almost everything, been reduced to near-homelessness – certain strains died, other patches had to be torn up to avoid law enforcement.

And now, like workers in just about every other sector, from auto manufacturing to big-box retail, Tobias is being forced to re-examine his place in the market. In the case of marijuana, this upset is not being caused by new technology, globalization or recession, but by a change in public consciousness. Like other once-divisive social issues – gays in the military, to take the most recent example – the specter of reefer madness seems to have lost its effectiveness as a political wedge-

ing tool. Robert Mikos, a Vanderbilt University law professor who has written extensively about the rights of states to defy the federal ban on marijuana, says the ongoing medical-marijuana experiments in California and elsewhere have opened the door for further decriminalization. It's allowed people "to see that all of the horrible things that the Clinton and Bush administrations predicted did not come to pass," says Mikos. "The world did not come to an end." Nadelmann, of the Drug Policy Alliance, agrees, noting he's recently been seeing "the most dramatic polling results in all of my years working on this stuff."

**T**HE LEGALIZATION FIGHT has acquired a new urgency in recent months thanks to the economy. In the past, of course, there were plenty of moral arguments to be made for drug-policy reform – from the money wasted on prohibition to the lives ruined by absurd prison sentences to the simple hypocrisy of banning a substance no more harmful than alcohol, tobacco or many prescription drugs. But compared to issues like civil rights or unjust foreign wars, protesting for the right to get high always felt, frankly, frivolous; even to a liberal pot smoker, listening to some dude from NORML go on about how the DON'T TREAD ON ME flag and the Gutenberg Bible and Abe Lincoln's stovepipe hat were *all made of hemp* can be just as annoying as a sobriety lecture from Bill

O'Reilly. Mikos didn't think the general public was onboard with "wholesale recreational legalization" – until this past year. "What pushed it over the top," he says, "was the realization that 'Hey, we could make a lot of money off this.'"

The economic collapse, in starkest particulars, has highlighted the fact that shifting marijuana from black market to organic farmers' market could be a boon to ravaged state economies. True, President Obama, in touting his new green economy, has thus far avoided mentioning this other, not-quite-so-new green economy. But some politicians are beginning to. California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced last year that "it's time for a debate" about legalizing pot, just before it was estimated that decriminalization could net California \$1.4 billion in annual revenue. (Schwarzenegger is unlike most other governors in that not only has he smoked weed with Tommy Chong, but when asked about it by an ambushing paparazzi with a video camera, he beamed and nearly shouted, "We always had a good time!") Another high-profile proponent of legalization also happens to be a Republican: former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson, a popular figure in the libertarian/Ron Paul wing of the party who is considering a presidential run in 2012. "Ninety percent of our drug problem is prohibition-related, not use-related," Johnson insists. "As someone who has smoked pot and consumed alcohol – and neither of them do I use today, I haven't had a drink in 22 years – I think people are waking up to the fact that when it comes to marijuana and alcohol, you can draw some very real correlations. The issue right now, nationally, is at a tipping point."

This fall, California activists will be taking the fight to the next level, having gathered 700,000 signatures for a November ballot initiative that would fully legalize pot. Tom Ammiano, a state assemblyman from San Francisco who got his start in politics working as a gay-rights activist – he portrays himself in the 2008 Gus Van Sant film *Milk* – has also reintroduced his own legalization bill in the state legislature. "The temperature has changed a lot in Sacramento over the past year," Ammiano says. "If we had a vote in the hallway, it would pass right away. You hear all these Republicans saying, 'Yeah! Tax that shit! I smoke it!' Well, why don't you smoke some right now and vote for the bill?"

Ammiano chuckles, then continues, "Obviously, the issue has become seductive in a way that perhaps it had not been before. People see their schools closing, they see furlough days and reduced health care, and then they see this \$14 billion industry that's untaxed and unregulated. So now, with dear old capitalism involved, everything is coming together in a perfect storm. In the Seventies, we had a term

## THE NEW GREEN ECONOMY

*Price of an ounce of marijuana in 1969: \$25*

*Current price of an ounce of Granddaddy Purps: \$600*

*Annual revenue of California's citrus industry: \$1.2 billion*

*Annual revenue of California's weed industry: \$14 billion*

*Number of states in which marijuana is the top cash crop: 12*

*Estimated number of medical-marijuana users in California: 300,000*

*Number of graduates from Oaksterdam University's cannabis-cultivation programs in Oakland: More than 7,000*

*Cost of starting a pot farm with supplies from iGrow, a 15,000-square-foot pot store in Oakland: \$800*

*Number of marijuana plants seized from California's national forests in 1994: 45,054*

*Number of pot plants eradicated in California's Sequoia National Forest in a 2008 operation: 420,000*

*Estimated street value of those plants, if harvested: Over \$1 billion*

*Number of forest acres destroyed for every acre of pot planted: 10*

*Total weight of all marijuana plants seized by the DEA in 2009: 3,285 tons*

*Total estimated street value of those seizures: \$31.5 billion*

*Amount of marijuana grown in the U.S. in 1981: 2.2 million pounds*

*Amount grown in the U.S. in 2006: 22 million pounds*

*Estimated number of marijuana-related arrests in 2008: 847,864*

*Estimated number arrested for possession only: 754,224*

*Percentage of all drug arrests that are marijuana-related: 49.8*

*Estimated annual cost of marijuana prohibition to taxpayers: \$42 billion*

called 'harmonic convergence.' I mentioned this to someone in their 20s, and they said, 'Dude, what is that?' It means all the stars are aligned. It's starting to feel inevitable."

The complicating factor is a legal landscape that has become increasingly surreal. Pot remains illegal on a federal level, yet in certain states, it's legal to consume with a prescription while remaining illegal to grow. In California, this means growers and dispensary owners, who are not supposed to be earning profits or even selling marijuana, continue to operate in a legal gray zone. Meanwhile, legitimate patients can possess marijuana, but they often have no legal way to obtain it.

Beau Kilmer, the co-director of RAND's Drug Policy Research Center, cautions that even if pot is fully legalized in California this year, "it's really hard to project what might happen." The ballot initiative would essentially give local governments the kind of autonomy extended to wet/dry counties. "You could see some counties set up Amsterdam-type coffee shops," Kilmer explains, "and you could see others setting specific policies regarding regulation and taxation." Other questions also naturally arise. If California legalizes pot and it works financially as well as promised, will other states rush to snatch their own piece of the sin tax, in the same way that some form of casino gambling has appeared in much of the country? How much would the price of pot fall as a legal commodity? How much should it be taxed? If the tax is too high, would the marijuana black market continue to flourish? Why would that black market – particularly the more organized gangs and biker clubs that have traditionally earned steady profits from the pot trade – give up this cash crop so easily to some yuppie dispensary owner? Forget the Hells Angels and the Mafia: Will Philip Morris or Pfizer swoop in and simply take the whole game over?

And what will happen to growers like Tobias? At this point, he thinks he'd be able to adapt to the new laws, but the increased competition could also hurt his bottom line. One of Tobias' friends, another longtime grower, tells me angrily, "We're the people who were out here taking all the risks, and now we're going to be squeezed out!"

Still, the financial success of growers in the Emerald Triangle, however niche, is a prototypically American one, a classic story of can-do frontier spirit that embodies entrepreneurship in the purest, market-capitalist sense of the term. And at a time of deep economic uncertainty, this sort of success might be something to pay attention to. Whereas cheap, mass-produced weed from Mexico and South America once dominated the U.S. market, about half of the marijuana sold is now high-quality domestic product. Part-

ly, this has to do with the tightening of the border after 9/11, making it more and more difficult to smuggle large quantities of pot. But, as *The Washington Post* pointed out last year, the homegrown bud often comes from "small-scale operators who painstakingly tend greenhouses and indoor gardens to produce the more potent, and expensive, product that consumers now demand." (THC levels of Mexican weed, while improving, hover around seven percent, whereas high-end weed in Northern California can reach THC levels of 20 percent.)

This is kind of amazing, if you think about it: a triumph of quality over mass-produced crap – and we're not the ones making the crap! Marijuana farming is exactly the sort of semiskilled, labor-intensive work that, in any other (legal) industry, would have long ago been outsourced to Mexico. But its very illegality has made growing weed NAFTA-proof. At a time when unemployment hovers around the double digits, when heavy industry and the family farm have been gone so long that to evoke either verges on Rockwell-esque nostalgia, when (we've all said it) America no longer even makes anything anymore – well, we do still produce extremely high-quality weed. And we're very, very good at it.

**O**N A FRIGID EVENING in January, in a bland suburban office park in Southfield, Michigan, just outside Detroit, about 25 students begin filing into an adult-education class. Three of the students – brothers Eric and Jerry Boyajian and their friend Jon Goodwin – drove three hours from Benton Harbor, a rural town on the opposite side of the state. "First time I've ever wanted to sit in the front of a classroom," jokes Goodwin as he settles into a chair at one of the room's long tables. A skinny 37-year-old wearing a gray T-shirt over a long-sleeve thermal undershirt, Goodwin is a plumber by trade. The Boyajians own a watch-repair shop. All three have seen their business drop, along with the fortunes of the rest of Benton Harbor: Two local stores, a sign shop and an old Italian restaurant, have closed in the past month alone. Jerry Boyajian, who is 39, a big guy wearing a blue knit cap with a Ford logo, pulls me aside and, lowering his voice, says, "We've never done anything like this before. But the economy's so bad, I'm making about half of what I used to make. So we started thinking, 'How can we get involved in this thing?'"

"This thing" is growing and distributing pot, which can be done legally in Michigan now, after 63 percent of voters passed a medical-marijuana law in 2008, allow-

ing a patient with a valid doctor's recommendation to grow their own marijuana – up to 12 plants. Alternately, a patient can obtain their "medicine" from a licensed caregiver, also registered with the state, who can grow for themselves and up to five patients. The state of Michigan has been inundated with applications for medical-marijuana cards: Since April 2009, there have been about 14,000 requests, or about 75 per day. With Michigan's unemployment rate still the highest in the country at nearly 15 percent – in Detroit proper, some have put the number at a staggering 50 percent – many residents see pot farming as one of the few growth industries in an otherwise ravaged state economy.

Which is where the Med Grow Cannabis College comes in. According to Med Grow's website, it's "the first Michigan-based medical-marijuana trade school."

**GROWING  
WEED IS  
NAFTA-PROOF**  
– America may  
not manufacture  
much anymore,  
but we are very,  
very good at  
producing high-  
quality weed.

**Med Grow is modeled after the wildly successful Oaksterdam University in Oakland, California;** the curriculum of the six-week, \$475 program includes Cooking and Concentrates and Cannabis History, with lecturers ranging from doctors and attorneys to a horticulture professor named Nature. The only required reading is Cervantes – Jorge, not Miguel de, author of *Marijuana Horticulture: The Indoor/Outdoor Medical Grower's Bible*. Since opening last September, Med Grow has been averaging 100 students each month.

Med Grow was founded by Nick Tennant, a slight, baby-faced 24-year-old in a dress shirt and argyle sweater who sits at a mostly bare desk; practically swallowed by his own executive chair, he looks like a kid playing Captain Kirk in his dad's office. Tennant grew up solidly middle-class. His father works for General Motors, and his mother handles foreign patents for an intellectual-property firm. He started his

first business – an auto-detailing service – when he was just out of high school. "I had a lot of automotive dealerships that were clients and they couldn't afford the service anymore – margins were getting thinner, stuff like that," Tennant says. "I was fighting for every dollar. So I knew I wanted to get into an emerging industry, something that would be more viable."

Though he says he was never a big pot smoker, Tennant looked at the Oaksterdam model and saw an opportunity. "It's better for society to stimulate micro-economies of scale," he says. "You give 10,000 people the opportunity to make \$50,000 a year, rather than giving 10 people the opportunity to make \$10 million a year."

Similar entrepreneurial endeavors have been sprouting up in medical-marijuana states all across the country, from "urban gardening" stores to ad-packed grow magazines like *The Midwest Cultivator*.

In December, Ganja Gourmet, the self-described "first gourmet marijuana restaurant" in the U.S., where you can order things like an \$89 cannabis pizza, opened in Denver; the ski town of Breckenridge, Colorado, has gone a step further, hoping to attract tourists by voting last November to legalize possession of up to an ounce of weed.

State-level medical-marijuana laws can be deeply puzzling to the average observer. Under a legal concept called "prohibited commandeering," the federal government cannot compel a state to enforce federal laws. According to Mikos, the Vanderbilt professor, "a state could basically say, 'If you want machine guns, or to obtain partial-birth abortions, or get a physician's help in committing suicide, or use cocaine or heroin, go ahead – we're not going to stop you.'" The state couldn't provide any of those services, or give its citizens any sort

**of financial subsidy to obtain such services – meaning that, in the case of medical marijuana, states can't grow their own weed on public farms or distribute it in a special line at the DMV.** "But," Mikos continues, "a state can remain very passive and look the other way while someone is violating federal law. They just can't stop the DEA or any other federal officials from enforcing that law. That's the tricky thing. Without the cooperation of the states, the DEA has to conduct raids on their own. And they just don't have that many agents. There are fewer than 5,000 nationwide, and they have to handle all kinds of drugs, not just marijuana."

Even for supporters of legalization, there can be a grating intellectual dishonesty to the medical-marijuana argument. Very few people would deprive cancer or AIDS patients from using pot for medicinal purposes. But everyone knows that the overwhelming majority of people in Cali-



fornia getting medical-marijuana recommendations are using pot as “medicine” the same way characters in John Cheever stories used three extra-dry martinis on the 6:15 bar car as “medicine.” A mini-industry of doctors who specialize in writing medical-marijuana recommendations has popped up; after paying a flat fee, usually in the ballpark of \$200, any number of vague “ailments” (stress, insomnia, a bum knee) will qualify you for a medical-marijuana card, good for one year. (For a state with such a health-obsessed reputation as California, I’ve never met so many perfectly fit-looking people in their 20s and 30s complaining about some sort of chronic back pain or nausea.)

Tactically, though, the medical-marijuana push has proved a brilliant move by those seeking to reform the nation’s drug laws. “Medical marijuana has transformed the image of the marijuana user from a 17-year-old with blond dreadlocks to a middle-aged person with a real disease,” argues Nadelmann of the Drug Policy Alliance. “It meant that people would talk seriously about the issue rather than laugh about pot as a gateway drug. It really helped transform the dialogue.”

#### INTO THE GREAT WIDE OPEN

Ever since California began its medical-marijuana experiment a decade ago, the state has been a national testing area for semilegal pot. (1) A San Francisco weed shop. (2) The Emerald Cup, the state’s weed competition. (3) An L.A. dispensary — there are as many as 1,000 in the city. (4) A DEA raid on a pot facility — the agency seized 3,285 tons in 2009.

By 6 p.m., the Med Grow classroom is beginning to fill up. The students are a demographic hodgepodge, including a young black construction worker from Detroit taking notes in a composition book; a white kid in his 20s with a goatee and a backward baseball cap; a ripped guy with a shaved head and a rattlesnake tattoo on his forearm who looks like an ex-Marine; and a mild-mannered 57-year-old with round glasses and thinning gray hair who decided to enroll after hearing about the medical-marijuana business on NPR.

Tonight’s lecturer, horticulturist Nathan Greene, has shoulder-length hair and a cocky smile. Truth be told, some of his growing advice sounds an awful lot like that of an illegal-drug dealer. He mentions how flushing a plant with water

can raise the final weight of the product by 50 percent, how “here in Detroit, all anyone wants is Kush or Purple.” He also recommends renting a commercial facility for growing, one that might normally be drawing a fair amount of power anyway, so the high electric bill won’t raise any red flags. “Even though you’re running a legal operation,” he adds quickly, “you don’t necessarily want to show up on anyone’s radar.” Then he tells a story about finding his own commercial grow space, one with no chance of walk-in traffic or need for meter-readers: “I told the real estate agent I had a company developing a top-secret widget. That’s all I said. Guy said, ‘What is it?’ I said, ‘It’s fucking top secret!’”

Emerald Triangle growers often use diesel generators to stay off the power grid. But another option is simply stealing power. “Half of Detroit is stole,” a local grower tells me with a cackle. “I had a buddy worked at Detroit Edison who had to go around looking for people stealing power. He’d roll up to places and have people put a gun to his head and say, ‘You’re not turning my power off. Get back in your truck.’”

One afternoon in Detroit, I visit John Sinclair, the poet and [Cont. on 82]

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more glorious.



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No reason to hit that snooze. Just hop out of bed and head down to McDonald's for the new Dollar Menu at Breakfast. Try a savory Sausage Burrito, a hearty Sausage McMuffin®, a hot cup of Premium Roast Coffee, and more, each for just a dollar. Nobody makes breakfast like McDonald's.



i'm lovin' it

# Reviews

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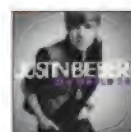
PG lyrics and  
R-rated hooks:  
Meet teen pop's  
new prince,  
Justin Bieber

## Justin Bieber

★★★

My World 2.0 RBMG/Island

BY JODY ROSEN



"MY WORLD 2.0" begins with 16-year-old Justin Bieber raising his pipsqueak voice in a wordless croon: "Oh-oh, whoa, ah-ah-ah." If it sounds faintly like an old-fashioned doo-wop vocal, that's no accident: The song, Bieber's fast-rising single "Baby," is a consciously crafted throwback. Listen to the chord progression, tapped out on a perky synth: It's lifted straight from those 1950s ballads that throbbed out of the soda-shop jukebox while your granddad gazed at his steady. Listen to the lyrics: "My first love broke my heart for the first time/And I was like/Baby, baby, baby, ooooh/I thought you'd always be mine." We're in "Tears on My Pillow" territory, "Why Do Fools Fall in Love" territory, "Earth Angel" territory. This isn't just cheesy teeny-bopper music – it's classically, sublimely cheesy teeny-bopper music.

As long as there has been rock & roll, there have been pretty-boy singers like Bieber, offering a gentle introduction to the mysteries and heartaches of adolescence: songs flushed with romance but notably free of sex itself. Bieber is not, as detractors might assume, another graduate from the Disney teen-pop industrial complex; he's a star who sprang from the grass roots – a Canadian schoolboy discovered by his manager (and his mentor Usher) via his YouTube covers

of songs by Chris Brown and Justin Timberlake, many of which feature Bieber accompanying himself on guitar.

Those who dismiss Bieber out of hand are missing out on a seriously good pop record, one that mines vintage teen-pop themes but plays like a primer on 2010-model bubblegum. The fun begins with "Baby," which blends winks at Fifties doo-wop with hip-hop chants ("Yo! Unh-huh!"), disco strings and one of the catchiest choruses concocted by the-Dream and Tricky Stewart, the duo behind "Umbrella" and "Single Ladies." "Runaway Love," a lush, sauntering midtempo song that plainly borrows from Michael Jackson, sounds like a perfect summer single. "Somebody to Love" is thumping Eurodisco.

With much help from A-list songwriters and producers (Bryan-Michael Cox, Benny Blanco) and guest stars (Ludacris, Sean Kingston), Bieber has made a filler-free album. Even the ballads – often a weak spot on pop/R&B records – are fully realized, with "Never Let You Go" and "Stuck in the Moment" mixing love-struck lyrics with big, lovable choruses.

Bieber's talent is not fully formed. He sings with swing and rhythmic dexterity (presumably learned from Usher), but his voice is nasal and lacks heft; the vocals sound pitch-corrected throughout. On "Overboard," a duet with 14-year-old Def Jam signee Jessica Jarrell, it's near impossible to tell the singers apart.

But Bieber has something more important for a young pop star than chops: personality. He's got an odd combination of guilelessness and swagger that makes puppy-love goop like "We'll take it to the sky/Past the moon/Through the galaxies" sound both sweet and playful. For parents in search of a fresh-faced male counterpart to Taylor Swift – and for millions of tweens looking for a cute boy who knows his way around a beat – help has arrived. As for the haters? Quoth the Bieber Twitter feed, "I wish u guys the best of luck in ur hating."

**Key Tracks:** "Baby," "Runaway Love," "U Smile"

# Badu's Complicated Return

The R&B earth mother gets caught up in freak-funk textures on 'Return of the Ankh'

Erykah Badu ★★ ★

New Amerykah Part Two: Return of the Ankh *Universal*



ERYKAH BADU'S HUSKY DRAWL IS ONE OF POP music's most compelling sounds. She's also R&B's most dedicated bohemian eccentric, as she proves once more on *New Amerykah Part Two: Return of the Ankh*. Her last album,

2008's *New Amerykah Part One: 4th World War*, was an electronica-based departure from the neo-soul warmth that made her a star. *Part Two* revives Badu's romantic side, and at its best it places her on a sun-splashed day in 1972: On the gorgeous "Window Seat," her supremely mellow voice is awash in jazzy Fender Rhodes keyboards and loping funk-soul grooves.

Problem is, Badu seems so taken by hazy texture – and so determined to play the weirdo – that she's neglected to write many actual songs. In "Love," a female voice intones, "There are only two emotions that human beings experience: fear and love," over a squiggly sound collage. Later, an instrumental number places tinkling harp arpeggios against drifting keyboard textures. That song's title? "Incense."

*Part Two* is most powerful when Badu goes for straight feeling: In "Out My Mind Just in Time (Part 1) (Undercover Over-Lover)," she stops in the cabaret, singing a torch song with some real feeling behind it. It's what *New Amerykah Part Two* needs: more angst, fewer ankhs.

JODY ROSEN

**Key Tracks:**  
"Window Seat,"  
"Out My Mind  
Just in Time"

**HAZY SEXY COOL** Badu's bohemian soul could use a little more focus.



## Titus Andronicus

★★★★½

The Monitor *XL*

Jersey band mixes Springsteen with Honest Abe



"TRAMPS LIKE US, baby we were born to die!" bellows Patrick Stickles on his band's second record. A Jersey rocker needs *cojones* to quote Bruce – and to make a concept album about the Civil War. Yet after an Abe Lincoln speech recited by Stickles' high school drama teacher (true to your school, dawg!), the band fires away, all martial snares, raging guitars and spit-spraying hollers, punk noise carved by folk roots. Lyrically, history and modern anxiety morph into freedom songs for an age where, then as now, "the enemy is everywhere," and neither whiskey nor "a pretty good GPA" will save you. But an album this excellent just might.

WILL HERMES

**Key Tracks:** "A More Perfect Union," "Theme From Cheers"

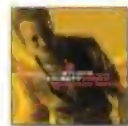
## Wilson Pickett

★★★★★½ **REISSUE**

Funky Midnight Mover: The Atlantic Studio Recordings 1962-1978

Rhino Handmade

Six discs of titanic soul music from a Sixties legend



THE FIRST BLAST here may be the most incendiary debut in Sixties R&B: Wilson Pickett's raw, triumphant cry in 1962's "I Found a Love," with the Falcons. Pickett didn't hit his cocksure strut until 1965-68 hits like "Don't Fight It," "In the Midnight Hour" and "I'm a Midnight Mover." But he hardly stumbled after that, cutting classics with Duane Allman and Philly-soul masters Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff, even covering Free's "Fire and Water." This set has everything from Pickett's rocky start and long peak, and it's rarely less than wicked.

DAVID FRICKE

**Key Tracks:** "Don't Fight It," "Fire and Water," "In the Midnight Hour"

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## BOOKS



### High Times With the Rolling Stones

Can't Always Get What You Want

★★★★½ Sam Cutler ECW Press

Sam Cutler, tour manager for the Rolling Stones in 1969, played the car horn on *Let It Bleed*'s "Country Honk" and came up with the idea of introducing the Stones as "the greatest rock & roll band in the world." But Cutler, who carried a gun on the '69 tour, also had to deal with the Hells Angels at Altamont. His memoir of his time with first the Stones and then the Grateful Dead brings to life hippie-era delights (lots of acid) and an encroaching darkness: Cutler suggests the government may have distributed bad LSD at Altamont. His prose can be clunky, but he unleashes one killer road tale after another – he punched Bill Graham, cuddled with Janis Joplin and often used a pickup line suggested by Bill Wyman: "How would you like to meet the Rolling Stones – and fuck me?"

BRIAN HIATT

## David Bowie

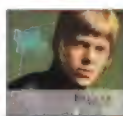
★★★★

REISSUE

David Bowie: Deluxe

Edition Deram/Universal

The psychedelic-cabaret past  
of a glam-rock giant



RELEASED ON the same day as *Sgt. Pepper*, David Bowie's 1967 debut was an odd

start for the man who'd soon turn his strangeness into stardom. He mixes the English music hall of the Beatles' "Penny Lane" with the psychedelic whimsy of early Pink Floyd, but even in this cabaret setting, Bowie shows his knack for mixing singalong tunes with off-beat subject matter: The catchiest song, "She's Got Medals," celebrates a cross-dressing lesbian soldier. Singles, stereo and mono mixes, and Bowie's first BBC radio session complete this early portrait of pop's ultimate shape-shifter.

BARRY WALTERS

Key Tracks: "She's Got Medals," "The Laughing Gnome"

## The Whigs

★★★★½

In the Dark ATO

College rock for the sports  
bar, and that's a good thing



ATHENS, GEORGIA, band the Whigs build arena-size tunes out of some very unarena influences – including the Replacements, Pixies, My Morning Jacket and Spoon. The band's third disc is the sharpest distillation of its neo-college rock yet, with Animal Collective producer Ben H. Allen's arty, wall-of-sound approach brightening singer-guitarist Parker Gispert's underdog anthems while rarely slowing them down. "I Am for Real" sets echo-chamber guitar grind to a disco throb; "Someone's Daughter" is a riff-monster stomp worthy of Billy Squier; and "I Don't Even Care About the One I Love" suggests the Whigs have got a great record of R.E.M. answer-songs in them, if the local bars ever stop producing hardhearted girls to shout about.

JON DOLAN

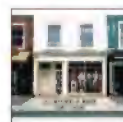
Key Tracks: "I Am for Real," "I Don't Even Care About the One I Love"

## Mumford and Sons

★★★★½

Sigh No More Glassnote

Throwback English folk  
rockers brood, mightily



IF DEXYS MIDNIGHT Runners aged into boozy pub-session romantics, they might sound like Mumford and Sons, a banjo-pickin', waltz-grindin' English folk-rock quartet. Marcus Mumford sings of London lonely-hearts on "Winter Winds" with words like "pestilence" and "plague" – loverman, where could you be? Yet Mumford's desperation, elevated in TNT dynamics, can be thrilling: These guys turn the *mea culpa* "I really fucked it up this time/ Didn't I, my dear?" into a pint-sloshing refrain. The band members are only twentysomethings – imagine the rousing heartbreak ahead.

WILL HERMES

Key Tracks: "Little Lion Man," "The Cave," "Winter Winds"

## The Orkustra

★★★★½

REISSUE

Adventures in

Experimental Electric

Orchestra Mexican Summer

Original artifacts from lost  
San Francisco psych rockers



FORMED IN 1966, gone by mid-'67, the Orkustra are the most intriguing forgotten band of San Francisco's golden age. Violinist David LaFlamme founded It's a Beautiful Day; bassist Jaime Leopold joined Dan Hicks' Hot Licks. Guitarist Bobby BeauSoleil fell off the love train and in with Charles Manson. (BeauSoleil is serving a life term for a 1969 murder.) But there was music, caught in the raw live and in rehearsals, and now released on this gorgeous vinyl set. What did the Orkustra sound like? A Balkan Velvet Underground, merging Near Eastern dance with drone and improvisation. And you'll notice, inside the rough fidelity, some melodies LaFlamme took to his next group's 1969 debut.

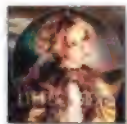
DAVID FRICKE

Key Tracks: "Bombay Calling," "Punjab's Barber"

## Little Boots ★★★

Hands *Elektra*

**Brit songstress delivers  
torchy electro pop**



RIGHT NOW, EVERY rising nu-disco diva has to deal with the Gaga comparison, and Victoria Hesketh, who records as Little Boots, has neither the personality nor the all-the-world's-a-fashion-runway chutzpah of pop's reigning megastar. What the Brit singer does have is a bunch of shiny, propulsive electro-pop songs. Hesketh is a dance artist with a torchy streak; minor chords creep up, and the lyrics reckon smartly with love and its discontents. In "Remedy," a collaboration with Gaga producer RedOne, she has a solution: disco as the cure to all ills. "No more poison killing my emotions," she sings. "Dancing is my remedy."

JODY ROSEN

**Key Tracks:** "New in Town," "Stuck on Repeat," "Meddle"

## Mose Allison

★★★★½

The Way of the World *Anti-*

**Veteran jazzbo still singin',  
swingin', stingin'**



"MY BRAIN IS losin' power/ 1,200 neurons every hour," sings 82-year-old Mose

Allison on his new album. If so, you would hardly notice. Too jazzy for pop, too poppy for jazz and too smartass for either, Allison is a tuneful misfit with a killer songbook (covered by the Rolling Stones, the Who, the Clash). On Allison's first LP in 12 years, producer Joe Henry sets him up amid unfamiliar backing instruments like Weissenborn slide guitar and mandola; Allison's leathery voice, sharp wit and jaunty piano improvisations remain remarkably undiminished. Theological highlight: the Swiftian "Modest Proposal," which suggests that amid global *jihad*, we should give all gods a vacation. It's timeless beatnik logic for a beat-up world.

W.H.

**Key Tracks:** "Modest Proposal," "My Brain," "This New Situation"

## DVDS



## The White Stripes

★★★★

**Under Great White  
Northern Lights**

Warner Bros.

Made by the White Stripes' buddy Emmett Malloy, this documentary covers the Stripes' 2007 tour of Canada, during which Jack and Meg did anything but play it straight: They performed in bumble-fuck locales like Nunavut and the Yukon, ate caribou with a group of Inuit elders and put on a slew of surprise gigs – in a bowling alley, on a boat and at an outdoor stage in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the Stripes banged out exactly one note, then left. The concert footage, which includes ferocious performances of oldies like "The Union Forever," is both intimate and a little grimy, making it seem like you're watching a soon-to-be legendary club gig. Offstage, Jack's and Meg's personalities have never appeared more different: He's by turns boisterous, philosophical and cranky, at one point deriding his ex-wife for not talking loudly enough. Meg, meanwhile, barely speaks, and her shyness gives the film a subtext: Not long after it was shot, her "acute anxiety" would cause the band to cancel a tour, and she seems supremely bummed in the film's touching final scene, where she sits next to Jack at a piano and cries into his arms.

CHRISTIAN HOARD



O, CANADA  
Meg and Jack  
White in 2007



## The Beatles

★★★★  
**All Together Now** Apple/EMI

This Grammy-winning doc traces Love – Cirque du Soleil's Beatles-soundtracked spectacle – from conversations between George Harrison and Cirque founder Guy Laliberté to the

show's 2006 opening. Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr reminisce, while George Martin and his son Giles explain in detail how they created Love's kaleidoscopic sound.

B.W.

## Usher

Raymond v Raymond

LaFace/Jive

**R&B star goes back on the  
prowl, with mixed results**



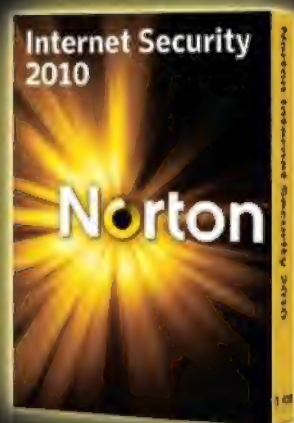
ON 2008'S snoozy *Here I Stand*, a then-married Usher sang about devotion,

domesticity and freaking the wifey (and only the wifey). Since then, however, Usher's marriage imploded – a development that's good for the single ladies of metro Atlanta but yields mixed results on his sixth studio disc. Usher tackles divorce on "Papers," where the normally cool singer seethes at his ex-wife. But mostly he's in loverman mode, delivering seduction-by-numbers like "So Many Girls" – a standard-issue electro jam with a blah chorus – and sonic Viagra like "Lil Freak," a sinuous Polow Da Don co-production where Usher spits hooks while guest Nikki Minaj sets up a *ménage à trois*. Maybe next time out, Ush can keep it up (musically) for an entire album.

C.H.

**Key Tracks:** "Lil Freak," "Papers"

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## TOP SINGLES

## Smashing Pumpkins ★★★

"A Stitch in Time"

smashingpumpkins.com

You would have to like Billy Corgan a whole heck of a lot to get excited about a 44-song prog-rock opus called *Teagarden* by Kaleidyscope. But "A Stitch in Time" isn't bad - a psychedelic ballad of Pepperland whimsy, full of Renaissance Faire frills and swirly 1970s synths. Throw in a bass solo, and we'd be talking early Yes. Even Corgan's nasal bray is toned down enough to permit pleasant listening.

ROB SHEFFIELD

## LCD Soundsystem ★★★

"Oh You (Christmas Blues)" *Leaked*

On this cut for Noah Baumbach's *Greenberg* soundtrack, disco-funk hero James Murphy ditches the grooves in favor of some acid-dipped Pink Floyd psychedelia. The results aren't as hot as you'd expect: all tinny, low-fi guitars and slug-gish bass. But Murphy's screamed tale of heart-break suggests he's still got some fire in his gut.

KEVIN O'DONNELL



Love live in London in February

## Courtney Love's Cranky Nineties Revival

Hole ★★★ "Skinny Little Bitch" [myspace.com/hole](http://myspace.com/hole)

The Nineties are so hot right now, it's no surprise that Courtney Love is staggering back to the spotlight with a "Get off my lawn" rant aimed at younger rock chicks. "Skinny Little Bitch" is so 1996 it hurts - Courtney tries to replicate Garbage circa "Stupid Girl," with the rhythm section lurching like Nirvana's "Dive" and a melody nicked from Sonny and Cher's "The Beat Goes On." Her voice is wobbly, but she holds

it together for this two-chord stomp. The new version of Hole isn't much of an upgrade over the last one - despite all the fanfare over hotshot guitarist Micko Larkin, he's barely audible here. It's all Courtney, slurring "I could kick your scrawny ass" at a rival who's a "nasty piece of work." Her put-downs might be lame, but at least they're comprehensible. From Courtney Love, that's quite a feat.

R.S.

## Drake ★★★½

"Over" *Leaked*

On the first single from his hotly anticipated debut album, Toronto MC Drake makes the spoils of success sound like something out of Camus. Producers Boi-1da and Al Khaaliq play up the tension perfectly; the beat sways and keeps falling over itself as Drake insists, "Everything is kosher/Two thumbs up - Ebert and Roeper." Then it explodes in diamond-studded radiance when he hits the chorus and wonders what it all means. Ambivalent awesomeness ensues, with Drake spitting dexterous rhymes about throwing \$100 bills and having too many new friends.

JON DOLAN

## Devo ★★★★★

"Fresh"

clubdevo.com

Devo stopped recording new albums in 1990, but 20 years off seems to have recharged their energy domes. The first track from a forthcoming LP, "Fresh" is a taut, catchy piece of New Wave eccentricity, with the herky-jerky energy of Devo's best work. If they keep it up for the full LP, it'll be the comeback story of the year.

ANDY GREENE



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## Drive-by Truckers ★★★★★<sup>1/2</sup>

The Big To-Do *ATO*  
Southern rockers make killer songs about crappy luck



WHENEVER LIFE knocks you down, the Drive-by Truckers are there to remind

you that things could always be shittier. On the 10th album from this remarkably consistent Georgia band, a sexually abused woman murders her lover, a two-timing rogue goes missing and is hoped drowned, and, on the very pretty waltz "The Flying Wallendas," a group of acrobats take a tragic tumble. Songs like the raucous "Birthday Boy" show off a ragged-glory guitar attack that was absent on the last Truckers album, but per usual there's no flash whatsoever – just seasoned professionals delivering doggedly tuneful, meticulously detailed vignettes that are part Lynyrd Skynyrd and part Raymond Carver.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

**Key Tracks:** "Drag the Lake Charlie," "Birthday Boy"

## Citizen Cope ★★

The Rainwater LP

*Rainwater*

Ex-hip-hop DJ gets his Everlast on, badly



A FORMER HIP-hop turntablist, Clarence Greenwood (a.k.a. Citizen Cope) takes

his career as a folk singer seriously. In fact, he seems to take everything seriously. Greenwood's fourth album presents grave acoustic blues suffused with Citizen Cope's mush-mouthed, half-rapped delivery and a few electro touches. On "Lifeline," Greenwood delivers bad, poetry-slam-style lyrics about hard times ("The cops got guns and the poor folks got sons who work for Mr. Franklin every week"), and on the grim ballad "Healing Hands," he sounds like Everlast during his folkie period. Cope doesn't have to be chipper. But he doesn't have to be so boring, either.

C.H.

**Key Tracks:** "Healing Hands," "Jericho"

## Bigbang

★★★★<sup>1/2</sup>

Edendale *Oglio/Grandsport*  
Norwegian theory becomes modern rock reality



STRONG, CLEAR reverberations of Sixties electric California and Seventies

power pop roll through *Edendale*, the second American release by Norwegian trio Bigbang. But this is a modern classic-rock band, and that is no contradiction. Singer-songwriter-guitarist Øystein Greni shuffles his references with ingenuity and melodic freshness. "Freeway Flowers" is a radiant nod back to the Big Star of *Radio City*, with the scarred-guitar flair of the Raconteurs; "Head Over Heels" and "Call Me" are tight packages of Tom Petty's plaintive retro-jangle and recent racing R.E.M. American rock history may be Bigbang's second language, but they speak it like natives – without looking backward.

D.F.

**Key Tracks:** "Freeway Flowers," "Head Over Heels"

## BUY THESE NOW

### Gorillaz

*Plastic Beach*

*Virgin*

The world's greatest cartoon rock band gets help from guests as far-ranging as Snoop Dogg and Lou Reed, who delivers a hilariously cranky cameo on "Some Kind of Nature."

### Jimi Hendrix

*Valleys of Neptune*

*Experience Hendrix/Legacy*

Cut in 1969, many of these previously unreleased gems are revelatory – including the title track and the breakneck "Lullaby for the Summer," both of which show a genius extending his reach.

### Joanna Newsom

*Have One on Me*

*Drag City*

The ambitious harpist delivers art rock that recalls Irish balladry and piano blues, with love lyrics that are archaic, funny and profound.

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# Movies

BY PETER TRAVERS



'TWILIGHT' GIRLS GONE WILD  
Dakota Fanning and Kristen Stewart

## Jailbait Rock

Kristen Stewart and Dakota Fanning bring girl power to music

### The Runaways

★★★½

Kristen Stewart, Dakota Fanning, Michael Shannon  
Directed by Floria Sigismondi

"COME ON, YOU FILTHY PUSSIES, let's rock and roll."

That trash talk is aimed at Kristen Stewart, 19, and Dakota Fanning, 16, stars of *Twilight: New Moon*, by Michael Shannon, in fierce, flamboyant form as evil-genius manager Kim Fowley. Kim is cursing the girls as members of the Runaways, a pioneering band of five jailbait rockers from broken homes that he wants to turn into the female Beatles.

Stewart gives as good as she gets. She's playing Joan Jett, 15, the shag-haired guitarist, singer and songwriter who co-founded the Runaways in 1975 and went on — after the L.A. band dissolved in 1979 — to achieve star status as a solo act. Fanning has it tougher as Cherie Currie, 15, a blond Valley girl molded by Kim into the band's lead singer and jerk-off

fantasy. Cherie is so naive she almost breaks down. In a killer scene early in the film, written and directed by music-video whiz Floria Sigismondi, Kim preps the girls for life in a man's game. Rehearsing in a crummy trailer, the girls are hit by bottles, cans, dirt and dog shit tossed by Kim and his toadies.

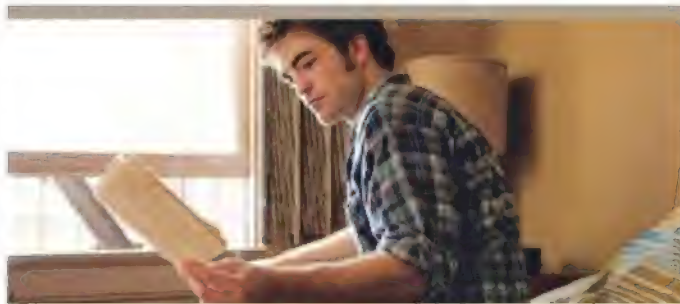
Cherie is told to sell the sexual heat in a song Kim and Joan create for her: "Hello, Daddy, hello, Mom, I'm your *ch-ch-ch-ch-ch-cherry* bomb."

The "Cherry Bomb" scene is a raunchy blast of rock history. And Fanning and Stewart, who do their own singing, seize the moment. As Kim tells Cherie

the dirty secrets of rock, "Fuck you, fuck authority, I want an orgasm!" she shows him what a wild child can be.

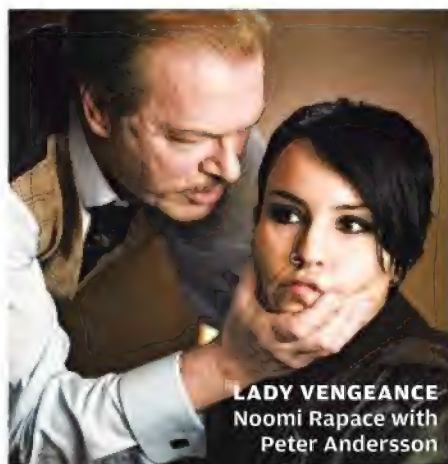
Fanning scores a knockout. And Shannon, as the "Frankenstein motherfucker," is a fireball of potent perversity. Sadly, *The Runaways* fades into dull predictability. Joan must wait for Cherie to screw up on drugs and sex (the make-out session between Stewart and Fanning is delicate to a fault) so she can step in and front the band. Stewart is just getting rolling when the movie ends. But face it, *The Runaways* is based on *Neon Angel*, Currie's 1989 memoir. She's the only one who gets a backstory.

The result is a walk on the wimp side. Guitarist Lita Ford (Scout Taylor-Compton) and drummer Sandy West (Stella Maeve) barely register in their own band. And Alia Shawkat shows up as an amalgam of Runaways bassists. Jett served as a producer, but the script never shows what drives her. What's left are colorful scenes of life on the road, especially in Japan, where the girls hit it big with a live album. But there's no sense of rock anarchy. Say what you will about the Runaways — they never played it safe. The movie does.



### Remember Me ★

Is there life after *Twilight*? Kristen Stewart makes a decent case in *The Runaways*. Now Rob Pattinson, her vamp lover, trades fantasy for reality in *Remember Me*. As Tyler, a New York college boy, the brooding RPatz doesn't bite. But his movie does. It's crudely written by Will Fetters and directed by Allen Coulter of *The Sopranos* (WTF?) as a love story between Tyler and Ally (*Lost*'s Emilie de Ravin), both with daddy issues. His (Pierce Brosnan) rules Wall Street, hers (Chris Cooper) is a cop. It's all weepy drool until the twist ending, which turns it shockingly offensive.



**LADY VENGEANCE**  
Noomi Rapace with  
Peter Andersson

## The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo ★★½

Noomi Rapace, Michael Nyqvist

**Directed by Niels Arden Oplev**

THIS DYNAMITE THRILLER SHIVERS with suspense. So if you ignore *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* (from the global bestseller by the late Stieg Larsson) because it's in Swedish with English subtitles, you probably deserve the remake Hollywood will surely screw up. Better to just go with the twisty flow as pierced, tattooed twentysomething hacker Lisbeth Salander (a dazzling Noomi Rapace in a star-making performance) teams up with middle-aged journalist Mikael Blomqvist (the excellent Michael Nyqvist) to unearth secrets in the family of an industrialist who thinks his niece was murdered 40 years ago. Homicide is just the tip of this Nordic iceberg, which finds Lisbeth and Mikael buried in perversities that would floor the Marquis de Sade. Lisbeth's revenge on her abusive guardian (Peter Andersson) is graphic enough to freeze your blood. No fair revealing more, except to say that Danish director Niels Arden Oplev fits the puzzle pieces together like a grandmaster of the mystery game. Larsson followed *Tattoo* with two more posthumously published best-sellers, *The Girl Who Played With Fire* and *The Girl Who Kicked the Hornets' Nest* (both shot for Swedish TV). But *Tattoo* is the only one directed by Oplev, whose gift for ratcheting up tension and deepening character makes him a talent to watch. His haunting and hypnotic movie gets under your skin.

## Leaves of Grass ★★★

Edward Norton, Susan Sarandon

**Directed by Tim Blake Nelson**

IT COULD HAVE BEEN A GIMMICK. CAST the gifted Edward Norton as twins – one an academic, the other not. Cheers to Norton and writer-director Tim Blake Nelson for mining the script's comic gold while hunting bigger game. The title, evoking Walt Whitman and pothead bliss, indicates the film's ambition. Norton's Bill

Kincaid, a philosophy prof at Brown, hasn't seen his pot-growing hick of a twin, Brady, since he left Little Dixie, Oklahoma. Brady tricks Bill to get him home. He wants Bill to reunite with their hippie mom (Susan Sarandon) and help him take down Jewish drug lord Pug Rothbaum (Richard Dreyfuss, shamelessly serving ham on wry).

The film's mix of violence and humor may throw you, but Nelson, who excels as Brady's pal, Bolger, is himself an Okie Jew with a Brown degree. He is clearly working through issues. We're all the better for it. He's crafted a hugely entertaining movie spiked with provocation. Despite Brady's cracklespeak, he is easily his brother's intellectual equal. Sexual, too. He hooked up Bill with the first girl who "guzzled his custard." Still, it's philosophy that governs *Leaves of Grass*, the question of whether you can live your life on a principle. Norton delivers a tour de force, a risky feat of acting that ranks with his best work. You leave this movie high on its daring.

## Greenberg ★★★

Ben Stiller, Greta Gerwig

**Directed by Noah Baumbach**

SEE THIS DARKLY COMIC CHARACTER study unburdened by preconceptions. Writer-director Noah Baumbach (*The*



### BOYS TO MEN

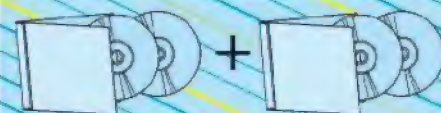
Edward Norton (above) plays twin brothers with nothing in common in *Leaves of Grass*. Left: Ben Stiller adds up to a one-man parade of neuroses in *Greenberg*.

*Squid and the Whale*) walks the fragile line between humor and heartbreak. Ben Stiller is exceptional as Roger Greenberg, a failed New York musician housesitting for his brother in the Hollywood Hills and wondering how life sent him adrift. Selfish, neurotic and often an asshole, Roger exists to sweat the small stuff. He's delusional about his ex-girlfriend (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and his former bandmate (Rhys Ifans). Why his brother's sweet, affectless assistant, Florence (Greta Gerwig), would go to bed with this grab bag of dysfunctions is a mystery even to Roger. But not to us. Baumbach tracks Roger without glib condescension. That's why *Greenberg* pulls you in. Even when you laugh, like in the climactic party scene, it hurts.

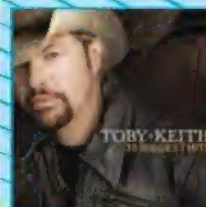
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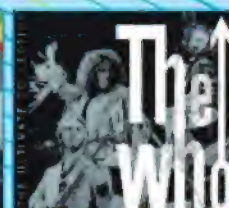
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[Cont. from 69] former manager of the MC5, and a longtime pot activist. Sinclair was famously busted in 1969 for possession of two joints and sentenced to 10 years in prison. By 1971, Sinclair was still doing time, so his supporters organized a massive "Ten for Two" rally in Ann Arbor, featuring John Lennon and Yoko Ono, Stevie Wonder and Allen Ginsberg. "In court, we'd been arguing that marijuana was not a narcotic, and that my sentence was cruel and unusual punishment," Sinclair, now 68, tells me. "Once the concert happened, though, the people in charge went, 'What the fuck? What are we doing? The Beatles are coming here for *this* guy?' I was out three days later."

Sinclair and Holice P. Wood, his outspoken co-manager, plan to open the first pot collective in Detroit. It will be called Trans-Love Energies, named for the Detroit commune co-founded by Sinclair in the Sixties. "Legalizing pot would be a viable way to turn this city around," says Wood. "Detroit is a place where even the people who have a real job also have a hustle going. And now most people have lost their real jobs." Wood, who notes that "there's no hope in hell of another industry coming here anytime soon," plans to make a detailed presentation to the Detroit City Council. He's confident that he will receive a warm reception. "The last City Council?" he says. "I probably smoked weed with half of them."

**W**HILE STATES LIKE MICHIGAN continue to sort out the parameters of their changing laws, residents and politicians alike will certainly look west, to California's 14-year medical-marijuana experiment, for some sense of precedent – or, in the case of Los Angeles, as a cautionary tale. Crazy, there's no official count of the number of dispensaries in Los Angeles. But their number has exploded from 186 in 2007, when the City Council – which had spent years avoiding the issue altogether – placed an ineffective moratorium on new dispensaries, to somewhere between 800 and 1,000. Most of them opened in the past 12 months.

Despite the excesses, experiencing certain sides of the L.A. dispensary-pot boom up close feels, most of all, civilized. One of the best arguments for proponents of an enlightened drug policy has been the success of the Farmacy, a minichain of L.A. dispensaries started by JoAnna LaForce. A licensed pharmacist who has worked extensively in hospices and with the elderly, LaForce makes her clubs feel more like upscale health-food stores than rundown head shops. The Venice location is bright and sunny and wide-open to the public, with Ella Fitzgerald playing on the sound system and much of the space taken up

by things like Chinese herbal teas, organic toothpaste and knit Himalayan purses. If you present your cannabis card to one of the people working the main counter, they'll hand you a laminated menu, listing strains like Sour Goat and Skywalker OG, and answer any questions about effects. Prices range from \$25 to \$85 for an eighth of an ounce. There is also a wide variety of cannabis-infused edibles, including six types of gelato, a tub of pesto spread (\$65), an "enhanced" peppermint patty (\$15) and, for the yuppie stoner who has everything, a fancy bottle of olive oil (\$199).

A few blocks down trendy Abbot Kinney Boulevard from the Farmacy, a newer dispensary, 99 High Art Collective, has more the feel of a hippie arts and community space. The front of the building is a gallery focusing on "artists with higher states of consciousness" – when I visit, it's a show featuring the work of a Peruvian artist who paints psychedelic jungle scenes and parakeets. (Admittedly, this exhibit is a strong argument for keep-

**"Legalizing pot would be a viable way to turn the city of Detroit around," says one veteran activist.**

ing pot completely illegal.) They also host "high yoga" classes and Friday-night "Get Happier Hours" with "medicated hors d'oeuvres." Co-owner Yvonne DeLaRosa is a pretty, dark-haired actress wearing a jewel-encrusted peace symbol over a low-cut floral chemise; she co-starred in a short-lived Fox sitcom called *Señor White*, playing, in her words, "the lovely Mexican señorita who runs Señor White's business and pulls his heartstrings." (She has also appeared on *Weeds*.) When she's working at the store, she generally goes by the name "99." "It means 'paradise of the gods' – in many cultures, it's the highest spiritual number," she tells me, before adding, "It's also the legal limit in Humboldt, as far as the number of plants you can grow." DeLaRosa's business partners include her husband, Sam, whose ancestor was Samuel Huntington, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Back up north, a grower and pot activist named Tim Blake is also laying the groundwork for a more legal future. One of the ventures he's spearheading is a group called the Mendocino Farmers Collective, a cooperative of local growers that would create a sustainable, certified-organic marijuana-growing community, one concerned with the environmental ramifi-

cations of their agricultural operations – basically, the Whole Foods of the weed industry. Water scarcity, for example, is a big issue throughout California, and illegal growers are sometimes caught stealing water from public rivers like the Eel; likewise, massive indoor grows leave a huge carbon footprint. Blake thinks the small pot farmer will survive, and thrive, in a legal world in the way microbrews have found a niche in a Budweiser-dominated market – by targeting elite connoisseurs.

With the current trendiness of the Slow Food movement and the fetishization of everyone from artisanal butchers to "rock-star farmers," it's not surprising that Blake and his friends also want to be taken seriously for their craft. "Growers up here?" he tells me. "We're the black sheep of our families. The guys who've never been able to be honored like the wine industry. And we're tired of that."

To that end, I visit Blake at Area 101, a 145-acre former campground on Highway 101 in Mendocino County where, on a violently stormy night in December, 700 people showed up to fete the winners of the 2009 Emerald Cup. Like the Cannabis Cup, Amsterdam's infamous Oscars of pot, the Emerald Cup honors the best strains of marijuana of the year. "Six years ago, we were afraid to do it," says Blake. "We thought we'd all get busted." That year, there were fewer than 20 entrants; an 86-year-old man won with a strain of Purple Kush given to him by his son.

Strains of marijuana are generally named by the original breeders, who then sell their "genetics" to growers like Tobias for anywhere from \$5 to \$100 per pack of seeds; a strain that becomes trendy, say by winning the Cannabis Cup, can fetch top dollar on the open market. At this year's Emerald Cup, there are 100 entries, all sampled over a period of only a few weeks by a distinguished panel of eight judges. (To qualify as an Emerald Cup judge, one needs to have had "at least a decade of smoking experience"; this year's crop of judges calculated that they had 330 years total among them.) Each entry is graded on a scale of one to 10 in various categories, including smell, taste, look and "effects"; points awarded for the latter category count, reasonably, as double. "It's a lot more work than one might think," one of the judges, a man who will identify himself only as Fuzzy, tells me. Fuzzy is wearing a vest over a purple T-shirt and knee-high waders; he does not tell me the origins of his nickname, but it most likely involves his cartoon moonshiner's beard. "We talk about the subtle undertones," he says. "The fragrance could be referred to as 'the nose.' The aftertaste might have 'a lingering fruitiness.'"

Blake, who owns Area 101, rules over the scene with an affect both mellow and deeply intense. He has a thin, bony face, slightly weathered, but with a glow – something

about him brings to mind an extremely healthy version of Keith Richards. His eyes, dark and sincere, with their tendency to linger too long on your face and their slight disconnect from his smile, give him the borderline messianic vibe of a cult leader. Before he settled in Mendocino County, Blake's résumé included creating a children's television series and an indie rap label, and working on the "virtual reality" special effects for the movie *The Lawnmower Man*. He also served a six-month jail term in the Nineties for growing pot.

Blake leads me through the crowd, weaving past people openly passing around joints and long glass pipes. (The only thing the cops around here care about, one of the organizers tells me, is making sure no one parks too close to the road.) In his office, a small group of friends relaxes on a couch, beneath a painting (on a blanket) of a UFO hovering over some trees. Someone else has fired up a vaporizer, which is making a flatulent, percolating sound. This year's Emerald Cup winner, a soft-spoken, middle-aged guy in a Carhartt cap named Hawaii Dave, sits on a chair near the door, shyly basking in his moment of glory. His winning strain, Cotton Candy Kush – an extremely strong indica (full-body high) strain with a sweet, berry-ish smell and taste – will likely fetch a higher price on the open market once word spreads of his win; past winners have seen their prices jump by as much as \$500 per pound.

Another judge, introducing himself as Swami, is a slight man with a long white beard, wearing a white robe, a knit cap, white tube socks and Birkenstocks. He has a kind smile that's also ever-present, in the manner of a guru who's always having to condescend to regular people's lower planes of consciousness. Swami agrees to walk me through the judging process, first having me examine the trichome crystals on a marijuana bud, using a jeweler's microscope. Then he instructs me to do sense-memory exercises as I smell a pile of ground-up weed on a paper plate: Maybe, he suggests, it reminds me of my mother's kitchen or of someone's stinky armpit? After rolling a joint, but before lighting it, Swami instructs me to do a "dry hit," purely for taste. "It's almost like a mindfulness meditation," he says, "like eating an apple and really tasting every bite."

Fuzzy acknowledges that judging multiple entrants in a single day might bias against slow-acting "creeper" strains – though, he adds, "I discovered that, after trying 18 different entrants in one day, you eventually pierce through the veil. You end up being able to determine effects with a minimal amount. 'OK, this one here is a

positive muscle relaxer.' This one is bright and electric, more high-energy." I would simply add that, after consecutively sampling the three top winners, "piercing the veil" is not the phrase that came to mind.

The dry-hit joint has begun making the rounds. Another judge compliments its "beautiful bouquet."

"I'd say there's some vanilla," she says. "And a hint of Pine-Sol."

AS EASY AS BLAKE AND HIS friends make it seem, there's a difficulty inherent in dragging an underground culture into the (natural, non-grow-room) light. Back in Detroit, a grower with a more serious criminal background tells me, "What if some kid decides to rob me?" He has about 300 plants grow-

**SEARCH AND DESTROY**  
A raid in California. "Getting flown" is pot-grower slang for the DEA spying on your crop.



ing in an unmarked warehouse building in a blighted light-industrial zone. "Am I willing to kill someone for 200 grand?" he continues, becoming heated. "Some of the people I grew up with, they'd kill someone for 20 grand. Do you see the dilemma I face? I don't want to kill some kid over pot. But what would I do? You steal my shit, I can re-gangsta."

In Los Angeles, many of the newer dispensaries are shadier, fly-by-night operations that are worlds apart from the boutique clubs in Venice. The San Fernando Valley, in particular, has become a hotbed of hole-in-the-wall dispensaries. They're run by Russians, Israelis, Valley kids in their 20s with seed money from their parents. These places are typically in strip malls, looking like porn shops with their blacked-out windows. Inside, the clubs are often nothing more than small rooms

with a clerk standing behind a counter, or bulletproof glass; "patients" often need to be buzzed in through multiple security cages known as "man-traps." One Valley club raided by police had a full airport metal detector.

Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman is also forced to deal with a natural fallout of such a thriving black market: violence. The image of Northern California remains one of hippies from Haight-Ashbury drifting north in the late Sixties and peacefully growing weed. But in fact, as one former trimmer tells me, "It's hippies with guns." Allman tells me that he has five unsolved homicides dating back from the past few years. The day before we spoke, his cadaver dogs uncovered the body of 49-year-old Steven Schmidt in a remote marijuana garden. He had been struck repeatedly in the head with a hammer; 62-year-old local resident Philip Frase has been arrested for the murder. He has pleaded not guilty. "It was a marijuana deal gone bad, no question about it," Allman says.

Adding to the tension is the increased presence of Mexican drug cartels who don't want to give up their extremely lucrative weed business and are finding it easier to smuggle growers across the border than large quantities of marijuana. The cartels have lately become infamous for setting up grows on public land, in remote areas in the many national parks in Northern California. "We're seeing illegals dropped off in the spring with seeds," says Allman. "During summer, food is dropped off to them – they don't come into town to do their shopping – and at the end of the year, after the harvest, they're paid forty or fifty thousand dollars." Most of the local growers I spoke to sounded nervous (often with more than a touch of jingoism) when asked about the cartels, who tend to be heavily armed

and have been known to booby-trap their grows. "The woods up here are dangerous – there are mountain lions, Mexicans," one grower warned me, adding, "and the Mexicans will *kill* you."

EVEN IF EVERYTHING GOES OFF perfectly for a grower in the Emerald Triangle – if their crop produces good weight, if their trimmers don't abuse their buds, if they're not arrested during a fluke raid or jacked along the way by bad guys with guns – at that point, they still have to deal with the final but most crucial problem: making the sale. In California, the decidedly mixed signals regarding cultivation and distribution hit growers – who should be profiting from the pot boom, if anyone does – the hardest; getting the weed across state lines, or even down to San Francisco or Los Angeles,

can be an exceedingly dangerous business. The current pot glut has only compounded the problem. "You used to be able to sell smaller amounts for more money," Vic Tobias tells me. But now, small growers are often forced into doing business with larger distributors – middlemen who have the means to transport the weed to larger cities where they have sales connections, and who have the purchasing power to push prices down. "It's like America – just like Walmart," Tobias says, shaking his head with disgust. "It's all about big corporations buying huge bulk for cheap. And the little guy gets screwed."

Still, Tobias, who has about 10 pounds of weed that is ready to be sold, knows a distributor who can move a bunch of weed out of Northern California. But he won't move less than 50 pounds. So Tobias has agreed to help the distributor put together enough weight for a shipment. Tobias is confident that they'll be able to pick up the weed for a steal, thanks to the current oversupply. "It's really a buyer's market now," he tells me one afternoon, as we drive along a windy mountain road, the heat in his truck buffeting us at full blast. "That," he continues, "and Christmas is coming up, so people want cash to buy presents. What are you gonna do: Leave a three-pound bag of weed under the tree for your kids?" Just then, he spots an unfamiliar car driving behind him. "Who's this guy?" he asks, slowing down to let the car pass. The car stays behind him. Finally, Tobias spots an open patch of shoulder and pulls over. The car drives past. He watches it suspiciously. "Probably nothing," he says. "But you never know."

Making the rounds with Tobias, I hear lots of stories. I meet a grower who, describing her bust, proudly notes that the cops were foolish enough to bring standard-size clippers. (When they saw the size of her plants, they needed to go back and get a chainsaw.) I meet growers who talk to their plants, and I meet a grower who says he jacks off into his patch – the plants are all female, after all, and isn't a fat bud basically the plant going (this grower says), *OK, I'm a bitch, I'm gonna spread my legs here, hope I get fucked?* I hear a story about someone's buddy, a dealer in L.A., who fronted \$5,000 worth of weed to one of the bestselling rappers of all time, and how that rapper was busted by the police while on tour, and how, when the dealer called the rapper and asked for his money, the rapper replied, "You need to talk to the po-lice."

Back at Tobias' place, he and the distributor go through their take. Garbage bags of weed are piled in one corner of a sunny day room, close to 30 pounds; thick stacks of twenties are taped up inside plastic turkey bags. (According to local lore, Reynolds Wrap noticed an unusual spike in the sale of plastic turkey bags in Humboldt County and was plan-

ning to stage some sort of local celebration until they realized the bags were being used to pack and transport marijuana.) "I knocked the last guy down a couple of points," the distributor says, meaning he reduced the per-pound fee by \$200. On a large flatscreen television, CNN is on mute – entirely coincidentally, it's a special about the marijuana industry. Anderson Cooper is standing inside some kind of drug tunnel in Mexico. The distributor glances idly at the screen, watches it for a moment somewhat disinterestedly, then goes back to counting his money. There's lots of hand sanitizer around because of the amount of money being handled. One of the several prepaid phones sitting around rings. (Everyone's prepaid looks the same, so they occasionally get mixed up, and people say things like, "Where's my blue phone?") Tobias answers and says, "Yeah, I need you to bring over that thing we were talking about."

It's a frantic couple of days, but in the end, Tobias and his connection end up get-

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**"Everything we do as a country is going away," says one pot grower. "But out here, we're blessed."**

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ting most of the weed for a great price – an average of \$2,000 a pound. Some comes from very small growers, just a pound or two; others from larger operators. One of the sellers laughs about all the talk of "medicine" in the dispensary world. Showing off his massive grow, he says with a grin, "As you can see, I'm a very sick fucker."

Tobias doesn't seem relaxed, though. He needs to check his "genny shed" – one of his diesel generators is either out of fuel or dead – and then there's the next five pounds to dry and process. We take a break to meet his girlfriend at a bar; she used to have her own grow in a remote spot several miles away. She doesn't want to talk to me about it, though. Nor does she think much of Prop 215 or the November ballot initiative. "It's all cool and almost legal," she mutters skeptically, taking a sip of her IPA, "until it's not."

**I**N 1999, WHEN GARY JOHNSON was still governor of New Mexico, he spent some time examining drug-policy reports, found the evidence for decriminalization compelling and publicly announced his support for legalization – and immediately saw his approval rating plunge from 58 percent to 28 percent, almost overnight.

"I wasn't blind – I knew that was going to happen," Johnson says today. "But actually having it happen was something else." Rather than backtrack or waffle, Johnson took a novel tack: He continued to speak out on the subject. "I vowed to myself to make it to every nook and cranny in New Mexico to explain to people what I was talking about," he says. "And I ended up leaving office with a 58 percent approval rating. I really see this issue as one of education." Later, he adds, "There is one segment of the population that is 100 percent against legalizing pot. And that's elected officials. What I've been telling anyone who'll listen is that legalization is a good issue. By good issue, I mean it makes sense. I really believe that, literally, one day all politicians are going to go to bed and get up the next morning and say, 'Yeah, OK.' I always say it's a litmus test for having a brain."

Ethan Nadelmann feels confident about the changes in the air. "The first thing we're going to see is a continued proliferation of tax-and-regulate and decriminalization bills around the country," he predicts. "And the medical-marijuana stuff is going to continue. We're getting close in Illinois, Connecticut, New York. The third thing is, ballot initiatives will begin to pop up. If Oaksterdam – the legalization ballot initiative in California, largely funded by Oaksterdam founder Richard Lee – "does not win in 2010, there's a commitment to come back four years later. Any state where legalization polling is above 50 percent, you'll start seeing initiatives. And eventually, some of those will win."

There are legitimate concerns about the social ramifications of such a major policy shift – a reduction in social stigma and street price, for instance, might spur a significant increase in usage. Others express principled reservations about certain of the claims being pushed by proponents of legalization, wondering whether the economic boon has been overhyped. "There are a lot of numbers being thrown around out there based on some very shaky assumptions," cautions Beau Kilmer, the RAND researcher. "We don't really know what will happen to prices after legalization, and it's unclear what the appropriate tax rate would be."

Of course, in a more positive economic telling, there would be numerous other new revenue streams, beyond just the sale of marijuana itself. The Emerald Triangle could market pot tourism, much as Napa Valley does with its wineries. And naturally, there will also be elaborate new types of vaporizers and pipes and rolling papers to serve the growing market. Britain's GW Pharmaceuticals, for instance, has been developing an asthma-type inhaler to regulate the exact amount of medical marijuana one might inhale. (One of the problems with writing prescriptions, even if

weed is eventually taken off the controlled-substance list, is the difficulty of prescribing specific doses.) Another grower I talk to claims his friend was approached by a major agrichemical company that is developing a cannabis seed that can produce a yield in 40 days with only eight glasses of water.

Not everyone is thrilled about the idea of an increased commodification of the weed industry, one of the last refuges from corporate infestation. It's been a pothead urban myth for decades that tobacco companies are waiting to take over the business the minute marijuana becomes legal – that spies from Philip Morris, for this very reason, have been trolling towns like Garberville, Ukiah and Eureka. Now that something like legalization might actually happen, that dangerous moment is approaching when pot smokers' paranoia will intersect with a viable reality.

Robert Mikos, the Vanderbilt professor, says an interesting historical parallel to consider is America post-Prohibition, when tens of thousands – perhaps hundreds of thousands – of illegal distilleries were concentrated into the liquor industry we have today: a handful of major companies that dominate the beer and spirits markets. Some predict that a similar consolidation could happen in California with legalization – that only a handful of big marijuana distributors would be left standing. "Walgreens isn't going to be selling pot, and Philip Morris isn't going to be growing it," Mikos says. "But a large California company might spring up to do that. And California as a state might do everything to foster that. It's much easier to regulate a product sold by four companies than one sold by thousands."

Over the past year, President Obama, while grappling with his own attempts at economic stimulus and job creation, has reportedly looked to Franklin Roosevelt's handling of the Great Depression for inspiration. Repeal of Prohibition is not normally listed as a New Deal jobs

program. Still, it happened in 1933, when unemployment had soared to nearly 25 percent, the high point of the Depression. Certainly repeal had some positive economic effects. Alfred Vernon Dalrymple, the National Prohibition Director – the drug czar of his day – predicted in *Time* magazine that repeal would mean "putting hundreds of thousands of men back to work and . . . hundreds of thousands of dollars of new business." And FDR himself – who, in 1937, would be the first president to make marijuana illegal – argued in a 1932 campaign speech in Sea Girt, New Jersey, that "our tax burden would not be so heavy nor the forms that it takes so objectionable if some reasonable proportion of the unaccounted millions now paid to those whose business had been reared upon this stupendous blunder could be made available for the expense of government."

People like Tim Blake, who have been out in the trenches – or, more accurately, out in the old-growth-forest-camouflaged gardens – have no doubt that major change, unlike any in their lifetime, is inevitable, that they are at the vanguard of a coming revolution. Imagine buying a joint as easily as you can buy a six-pack of Corona. Imagine the rap-song product placements. Imagine the *Super Bowl* ads. "People won't be able to make a killing if pot becomes legal and the big players come in," Blake concedes. "But they'll be able to make a living. What's gonna happen is, if you really love growing cannabis, you'll be able to make a living doing something you love. You won't be making million-dollar deals. But look around – the whole country is going under." Blake, a self-described survivalist, is warming up to the topic now. "Farming, industry, everything we as a country do as a country is going away," he continues. "We're lucky out here. We're blessed." Fixing me with one of his long stares, a grin frozen on his face, he speaks as if he can see the future, and he likes it. Then again, he might just be high.

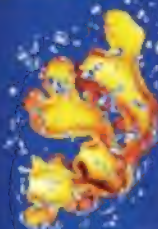
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## JIMI HENDRIX

[Cont. from 57] Stills' song "Old Times Good Times."

"We also sang some old bluesy songs together," Stills goes on. "We sounded nice together. Then we went clubbing, thinking we were going to come back. He drifted off with a female companion," Stills notes, laughing. Two days later, Hendrix was at Olympic Studios with Lee, soloing on a song, "The Everlasting First," that appeared on Love's *False Start*, shortly after Hendrix's death.

Rock bottom, for Hendrix, came on January 28th, 1970, in a disastrous appearance with Band of Gypsys at Madison Square Garden. They went on at 3 a.m., stumbled through two songs and left. Hendrix immediately broke up the group.

"He was in a bad mood when Buddy and I walked into the dressing room," Cox says. According to some accounts, Hendrix took too much acid or got spiked by someone else. Cox's version: "Michael Jeffrey was sitting next to him, and they had some confrontation prior to us arriving." A week later, Hendrix, Mitchell and Redding were interviewed for a ROLLING STONE story announcing the reunion of the Experience. They broke up again before the issue was printed.

It was easy to see why, in the story as it appeared in March 1970: Hendrix sounded desperate, even defeated. "Most of the time I can't get it on the guitar, you know?" he said about songwriting. "Most of the time I'm just laying around daydreaming and hearing all this music. . . . If you go to the guitar and try to play it, it spoils the whole thing. . . . I just can't play the guitar that well, to get all this music together."

But he was a reborn man that summer at Electric Lady. "He was thrilled to have a place where his gear was set up, ready to go when he walked in," says Kramer. At the console, "Jimi always had a large legal pad with him. He would sketch things out, where they were supposed to go." In Studio A, with Cox and Mitchell, "if we hit a brick wall, Jimi would already have another song in mind. He would start playing the riff, and Billy and Mitch would be right with him, knowing where he was going."

On August 14th, 1970, at Electric Lady, Hendrix wrote a memo headlined "Songs for the LP Straight Ahead" — one of a couple of provisional titles for his next album — and listed 24 songs, including "Ezy Ryder," the racing identity crisis "Room Full of Mirrors," the waterfall-guitar ballad "Angel" and a version of "Valleys of Neptune." At one point, he made another list; the double LP became a triple album, *People, Hell and Angels*.

On August 22nd, Hendrix and Kramer prepared a different running order — a double album again — with the survivor's blues "In From the Storm" and the new-morning hymn "Hey Baby (New Rising Sun)." Hendrix also recorded a new song, "Belly Button Window," a playful boogie with vocal, guitar and overdubbed wah-wah. It was the last song he ever recorded, inspired by the baby growing inside Mitchell's pregnant wife, Lynn.

In London for that last European tour, Hendrix talked about his latest music, in the *Melody Maker* interview, like it was ready for the world, with an assurance that the world would be different afterward: "The term 'blowing someone's mind' is valid. . . . But we are going to give them something that will blow their mind, and while it's blown, there will be something to fill the gap. It's going to be a complete form of music."

Hendrix was back in London after the European shows when he called Kramer in New York. "We had mixed four songs for the new record," Kramer says. "The album was almost complete. He wanted me to bring the tapes to London. I said, 'We're in the middle of stuff here. We've just built this studio.' He said, 'Yeah, I know. Don't worry about it. I'll see you in a week.'"

"That was the last thing I heard from him."

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## BEN STILLER

[Cont. from 61] Have you changed the way you work?

Five or six years ago, I figured out I can't work that much anymore, with kids and wanting to have a life. I'm willing to not know what I'm doing next, and kind of enjoying that, too. I used to think you could say, "I'm going to do X movie, then Y movie, then Z movie." And what I learned is that you can do X movie, and then it changes how you feel in your life about whether or not you want to do Y movie. I just went on this trip to Africa, and in two weeks it changed my perspective on what I'm doing for the next six months. That's what happens in life, if you're open.

So how many movies are you locked into doing right now?

Zero. It's a great place to be. Do I wish I knew what I was doing for the next three months? Yes, because that's the way my mind works. But if I can accept it, I can enjoy the time.

You've worked early on with most of the great comedic talents of the past two decades. Is there something you look for when scouting young comedians?

It seems kind of obvious, but just somebody who makes you laugh, like Zach Galifianakis or Will Ferrell. Actors who have a real sensibility specific to who they

are. A harder thing to find is funny comedy directors. If you can do that, there's a lot of job openings in Hollywood.

Do you feel like there are fewer great comedies being made now because of the focus on making epic 3-D films to get people into theaters?

I'm not a good person to ask about that. Comedies are not what I seek out. I'm more interested in seeing dramas or something that's cinematic or a great documentary. I liked *In the Loop*, and a lot of those British guys like Steve Coogan and Ricky Gervais. There's a subtlety to the humor, and there's a lack of need for it to have any sort of broad appeal other than just letting people be people and letting the uncomfortable spaces in between exist.

You described yourself as uncomfortable in social settings. Do you think you were attracted to comedy because positive laughter is one of the most sincere forms of approval?

Yeah, maybe. But I've never been the guy who goes and gets laughs at a party. That hasn't been my *modus operandi*. So far I've successfully not thought about the fact that you're recording every word I'm saying and trying to analyze it.

Earlier when you said, "I find Los Angeles so depressing," I could tell you instantly regretted it.

Yeah, yeah. That's like almost everything I say. All I ever think about is how this is going to totally get misconstrued.

Do you think you're happier now than you have been in the past?

I guess I'm realizing that I don't have control over anything, and that's a very freeing feeling. I remember being at a point in my life where I got bored. Now there's always a book I want to read or a movie I want to see or a place where I want to go. And I genuinely enjoy watching my son's karate class. As cliché as it sounds, a half-hour of watching your four-year-old do karate, it's insane how enjoyable that is. I'm standing there, and I have to acknowledge that nothing beats that. If everything else I'm working on doesn't come together, I can have more time for that.

ROLLING STONE (ISSN 0035-791X) is published biweekly except for the first issue in July and at year's end, when two issues are combined and published as double issues, by Wenner Media LLC, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10104-0298. The entire contents of ROLLING STONE are copyright © 2010 by ROLLING STONE LLC, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without written permission. All rights are reserved. Canadian Goods and Service Tax Registration No. R125041855. International Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement No. 450553. The subscription price is \$39.96 for one year. The Canadian subscription price is \$52.00 for one year, including GST, payable in advance. Canadian Postmaster: Send address changes and returns to P.O. Box 63, Malton CFC, Mississauga, Ontario L4T 3B5. The foreign subscription price is \$80.00 for one year, payable in advance. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Canada Post publication agreement #40683192. Postmaster: Send address changes to ROLLING STONE Customer Service, P.O. Box 8243, Red Oak, IA 51591-1243.

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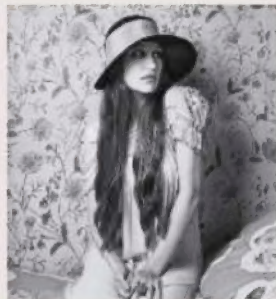
## iTunes TOP 10 SONGS

- 1 **Taio Cruz**  
"Break Your Heart" - Island
- 2 **Rihanna**  
"Rude Boy" - SRP/Island Def Jam
- 3 **Black Eyed Peas**  
"Imma Be" - Will.i.am/Interscope
- 4 **Train**  
"Hey, Soul Sister" - Columbia
- 5 **Lady Antebellum**  
"Need You Now" - Capitol Nashville
- 6 **Young Money**  
"Bedrock" - Cash Money/Universal Motown
- 7 **Ke\$ha**  
"Blah Blah Blah" - Kemosabe/RCA
- 8 **Jason Derulo**  
"In My Head" - Beluga Heights
- 9 **Justin Bieber**  
"Baby" - RBMG/Island
- 10 **Justin Bieber**  
"Never Let You Go" - RBMG/Island

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## COLLEGE RADIO TOP 10 ALBUMS

- 1 **Beach House**  
Teen Dream - Sub Pop
- 2 **Yeasayer**  
Odd Blood - Secretly Canadian
- 3 **Hot Chip**  
One Life Stand - Astralwerks
- 4 **Spoon**  
Transference - Merge
- 5 **Vampire Weekend**  
Contra - XL
- 6 **Local Natives**  
Gorilla Manor - Frenchkiss
- 7 **Magnetic Fields**  
Realism - Nonesuch
- 8 **Four Tet**  
There Is Love in You - Domino
- 9 **Charlotte Gainsbourg**  
IRM - Elektra/Because
- 10 **Joanna Newsom**  
Have One on Me - Drag City



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## From the Vault

RS 837, March 30th, 2000

### TOP 10 SINGLES

- 1 **Destiny's Child**  
"Say My Name" - Columbia
- 2 **Santana**  
"Maria Maria" - Arista
- 3 **Faith Hill**  
"Breathe" - Warner Bros. (Nashville)
- 4 **Lonestar**  
"Amazed" - BNA
- 5 **'N Sync**  
"Bye Bye Bye" - Jive
- 6 **Backstreet Boys**  
"Show Me the Meaning of Being Lonely" - Jive
- 7 **Montell Jordan**  
"Get It on... Tonite" - Def Soul
- 8 **Santana**  
"Smooth" - Arista
- 9 **Celine Dion**  
"That's the Way It Is" - Epic/550
- 10 **Sisqó**  
"Thong Song" - Def Soul



### On the Cover

"When our fans go off to college, we'll be older too, and talking about different things. Grunge was mad in six years ago, but Pearl Jam are still making and selling records. You know, the good groups stick around, and the other stuff fades away."

—JC Chasez

## Top 40 Albums

- 1 2 ↑ **Lady Antebellum**  
Need You Now - Capitol Nashville
- 2 1 **Sade**  
Soldier of Love - Epic
- 3 NEW **Blake Shelton**  
Hillbilly Bone (EP) - Reprise/Warner Bros. (Nashville)
- 4 NEW **Danny Gokey**  
My Best Days - 19/RCA Nashville
- 5 NEW **Alice in Wonderland: Almost Alice**  
Soundtrack - Buena Vista
- 6 NEW **Lifeshouse**  
Smoke & Mirrors - Geffen
- 7 5 **Lady Gaga**  
The Fame - Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope
- 8 4 **Black Eyed Peas**  
The E.N.D. - Will.i.am/Interscope
- 9 NEW **Raheem DeVaughn**  
The Love & War Masterpiece - 1228/Jive
- 10 NEW **Easton Corbin**  
Easton Corbin - Mercury Nashville
- 11 NEW **Jason Derulo**  
Jason Derulo - Beluga Heights
- 12 6 **Lil Wayne**  
Rebirth - Cash Money/Universal Motown
- 13 7 **Ke\$ha**  
Animal - Kemosabe/RCA
- 14 NEW **DJ Khaled**  
Victory - We the Best
- 15 10 **Justin Bieber**  
My World (EP) - RBMG/Island
- 16 12 **Lady Gaga**  
The Fame Monster (EP) - Streamline/KonLive/Cherrytree/Interscope
- 17 9 **Taylor Swift**  
Fearless - Big Machine
- 18 8 **Susan Boyle**  
I Dreamed a Dream - Syco/Columbia
- 19 13 **Alicia Keys**  
The Element of Freedom - MBK/J
- 20 16 **Zac Brown Band**  
The Foundation - Roar/Bigger Picture/Home Grown/Atlantic
- 21 3 **Johnny Cash**  
American VI: Ain't No Grave - American/Lost Highway
- 22 14 **Rihanna**  
Rated R - SRP/Def Jam
- 23 15 **Jaheim**  
Another Round - Atlantic
- 24 18 **Josh Turner**  
Haywire - MCA Nashville
- 25 26 **Trey Songz**  
Ready - Song Book/Atlantic
- 26 NEW **Peter Gabriel**  
Scratch My Back - Real World
- 27 19 **Michael Bublé**  
Crazy Love - 143/Reprise
- 28 21 **Carrie Underwood**  
Play On - 19/Arista Nashville
- 29 17 **Mary J. Blige**  
Stronger With Each Tear - Matriarch/Geffen
- 30 25 **Crazy Heart**  
Soundtrack - Fox/Fox Searchlight
- 31 22 **Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel**  
Soundtrack - Fox
- 32 29 **Young Money**  
We Are Young Money - Cash Money/Universal Motown
- 33 20 **TobyMac**  
Tonight - Forefront
- 34 24 **Lady Antebellum**  
Lady Antebellum - Capitol Nashville
- 35 56 **Daughtry**  
Leave This Town - 19/RCA
- 36 32 **Jason Aldean**  
Wide Open - Broken Bow
- 37 27 **Melanie Fiona**  
The Bridge - SRC/Universal Motown
- 38 44 **NOW 32**  
Various Artists - EMI/Universal/Zomba
- 39 30 **Selena Gomez and the Scene**  
Kiss & Tell - Hollywood
- 40 NEW **Flogging Molly**  
Live at the Greek Theater - SideOneDummy



### Nashville Idol

Gokey finished third last season on *American Idol*, but his LP had the best first week for a new country act since Billy Ray Cyrus in 1992.



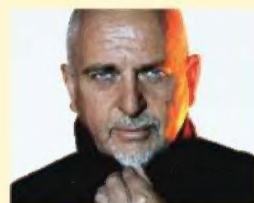
### Avril's Wonderland

Avril Lavigne, Robert Smith and Wolfmother contributed cuts to the soundtrack of the trippy Tim Burton hit. It debuted with 58,083 copies.



### Derulo Rules

Singer Derulo's "Watcha Say" - based on an Imogen Heap sample - hit Number One in November. His debut LP sold 42,273 copies its first week out.



### Peter Pipes Up

Gabriel's first studio album since 2002's *Up* features orchestral, drum-and-guitar-free covers of Radiohead, David Bowie and Arcade Fire.

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